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God Gave the Growth

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God Gave the Growth

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The Story of

The Lutheran Minnesota Conference

1876 - 1958

By Emeroy Johnson

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Publishers
T. S. DENISON & COMPANY
Minneapolis

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The Lutheran Minnesota Conference
of the Augustana Lutheran Church

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Printed in the U. S. A.
By The Brings Press

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 58-10162

Published by T. S. Denison & Company
For The Lutheran Minnesota Conference

PREFACE

Minnesota is observing the 100th anniversary of its statehood in this year of 1958. The story of this state's development from pioneer times to the present complex, industrialized way of life, is being told in programs, pictures, pageants, and publications.

The Lutheran Minnesota Conference of the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church also is observing its centennial in 1958. Since the day of its establishment—October 8, 1858—at Center City, Chisago County, the Conference has carried on a never-ceasing work of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, teaching the doctrines of the Church, ministering to those in need, striving to extend the kingdom of God.

Plans for the observance of the Conference centennial were initiated by the Executive Board in 1954. The undersigned was then requested to write the story of the Conference for publication. This volume is the result of that request. A booklet entitled "Five Score Years" published in 1957, gives the history of the Conference in summary form. The present volume, larger in scope, seeks to give a more complete account. It is based on the official records of the Conference, besides manuscript letters and reports, newspaper items, and the previously pubished histories of the Conference.

The writer confesses that it has been impossible to do full justice to the task. It has been impossible to give due credit to each and every individual who has had a part in the work of the Conference. There is a verse of Scripture that comes to mind:

"What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." (I Corinthians 3. 5,6)

—Emeroy Johnson

Septuagesima Week, 1958

CONTENTS

Chapters Page

I. THE PEOPLE CAME 1

II. THE RED RIVER VALLEY 5

III. THE PRAIRIE PROVINCES 20

IV. TO THE BLACK HILLS 35

V. THE ARROWHEAD REGION 49

VI. ALONG THE ST. CROIX 71

VII. WHEN THE FORESTS WERE GONE 81

VIII. THE MILLE LACS REGION 88

IX. COKATO AND WEST 97

X. THE MINNESOTA VALLEY REGION 114

XI. THE GOODHUE SECTOR 130

XII. ST. PAUL AND ENVIRONS 144

XIII. MINNEAPOLIS AND SUBURBAN AREA 160

XIV. FROM RURAL TO URBAN 190

XV. FROM SWEDISH TO ENGLISH 209

XVI. THE STORY OF SOCIAL MISSIONS 228

XVII. CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION 242

XVIII. GOD GAVE THE GROWTH 263

Chapter I

The People Came

Minnesota's first highways were the rivers and the lakes, travelled centuries ago by Indians in their canoes, and in more recent times by explorers, voyageurs, traders, soldiers, lumbermen, tourists, and settlers.

Lake Superior, the Mississippi River with its tributaries, and the Red River were the natural gateways to the Minnesota region. During the fur trading era—about 1680 to 1840—Lake Superior was the main traffic route. The lumber industry, beginning about 1840, found the Mississippi, the St. Croix, and the Rum Rivers most useful, and these waterways also became the chief route for the vanguard of incoming settlers. No railroad connected Minnesota with the east until 1867.

Part of the region—the land between the St. Croix and the Mississippi—was opened for white settlers in 1837. It was then a part of Wisconsin Territory.Before this region had acquired the name Minnesota a busy fleet of river steamers and an occasional prairie schooner had brought Yankees from down east and a few immigrants from the old world to these new virgin lands. By 1849 St. Paul had 1,200 inhabitants, Stillwater had 600, St. Anthony 300, and perhaps another one or two thousand could be found in other small settlements along the rivers. Congress organized Minnesota Territory in 1849, and this act gave new impetus to the stream of settlers bound for Minnesota. In 1850 the census showed approximately 6,000 people living in the Territory. In the next ten years this figure jumped to 172,000. Minnesota became a state on May 11, 1858. In 1865 the population was 250,000, and in 1870 it was 439,000.

European immigrants constituted a large percentage of the settlers, principally from the Scandinavian countries and Germany. Penniless they were, many of them, but eager and hopeful in their search for a parcel of land they could call their own, where they could sow and tend and harvest their crops and build their homes.

The regions west of the Mississippi, north to the Red River country, were ceded to the United States government by the Sioux tribes in 1851, and soon afterwards the great "Suland" was opened for settlement. Settlers stepped ashore at Winona or Red Wing, to look for jobs in town or to build homes in the rural areas nearby. Others went up to St. Paul, Minneapolis, Anoka, St. Cloud, but the greater number went to look for land farther west. The first towns were on the banks of the navigable rivers. But this form of transportation was not sufficient. Roads were needed for military purposes, for hauling supplies to logging camps, for access to markets, for mail service and stagecoach travel between towns and villages, and to open the way to the new, unsettled lands. Roads were built, first in the southeastern sector of the state, later fanning out westward and northward. But progress in road-building was generally too slow for the incoming stream of settlers. The covered wagon drawn by a yoke of oxen, or, more rarely, by a team of horses, did not stop even at the end of the road. It set out through the Big Woods, over the trackless prairies and across the unbridged rivers, to follow the trail of the bison and the Indians or to mark a completely new set of hoof prints and wheel ruts.

After the Indian uprising of 1862 the Sioux were driven out of the state, the Chippewa in the northern regions were confined to reservations. Settlers came in ever increasing numbers. Within an incredibly short period of time the frontier had completely vanished from Minnesota. Though there still was much unoccupied land, and though many homesteaders still lived in log houses or sod huts, there was no real frontier left in Minnesota by the end of the 1860's. In two decades the tide of immigration and settlement had swept across the state from east to west and on into the Dakotas.

Sweden and Norway contributed largely to the stream of migration to this region. In 1850 Minnesota had twelve Scandinavians. Ten years later there were 12,000. In 1880 there were 107,700, of whom

62,500 were born in Norway, 39,100 in Sweden, and 6,100 in Denmark. By far the greater number of these people settled on the land, eagerly grasping the opportunity to get a homestead for almost nothing, though it meant hard work and often severe hardship. A few of the immigrants came seeking only a quick fortune and then a return to their old homeland, or a venture into new and greater excitement. These people were in the minority. The cities of Minnesota attracted comparatively few of the Scandinavian immigrants until after 1875. Few of them had come from cities in Sweden and Norway. Few were skilled in any trade. Most of them were eager to take a homestead or to buy a farm if they could afford it. Colonies of Scandinavians sprang up in many places. Chisago, Goodhue, Carver, and Nicollet counties offer typical examples of Scandinavian rural areas.

The great majority of the Scandinavian settlers were Lutherans, since this was the established religion in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. But after the emigrants left their homeland the church paid scant attention to them. The Lutheran Churches in the United States at that time were almost solidly German, and not greatly interested in the needs of the Swedes or the Norwegians, except for a few shining examples of vison and zeal on the part of some who had the foresight to believe that the mid-west had a future.

Though the Lutheran Church was slow in reaching the scattered settlements in Minnesota and the neighboring regions, the people themselves often took the initiative in answering the question, What about our faith and our church here in America? In practically every colony there were at least a few devout souls, men and women who kept alive in their hearts and their homes the spark of divine faith kindled in them by the church in their old homeland. Usually they did not wait for an ordained minister to come to them before they gathered as a group of neighbors and friends to worship together.

When a few Lutheran pastors came—the first one in 1854—a little galaxy of Lutheran congregations came into being. Some of these pastors and congregations organized themselves as the Lutheran Minnesota Conference in 1858. The story of how this came about has been told in a book entitled "A Church Is Planted" published by the Conference in 1948. It gives an account of the origin of early Swedish settlements and the history of the Conference during the pioneer period, to about 1876. It is the purpose of the present volume to take up the story at that point and continue to the present time.

The Minnesota Conference had no northern or western boundaries in 1876. The frontier still beckoned to the land-seekers who dared to set out across the plains of Dakota and Canada, and where the settlers went the missionaries of the Conference sought to go. They went to share Christ with their neighbor, even when the neighbor was a thousand miles away. They planted the church in scores of new and hopeful colonies, some of which have failed to survive, but nevertheless have contributed something to the total story of the growth of the Conference.

The plan of this book is to trace first the story of the Conference in the Red River Valley area and Canada, regions which in 1912 and 1913, respectively, became separate conferences; then the story of the other far western and far northern areas, in South Dakota and in the Arrowhead region; then from the upper St. Croix Valley area counterclockwise around the circle to southeastern Minnesota; and concluding with the great population center, the Twin Cities, where more than forty per cent of the members live at present. There is a separate chapter on the rural-urban trend, one on the language transition, one on Christian higher education, and one on the social mission program of the Conference.

Chapter II

The Red River Valley

As a segment of the church which Jesus Christ has established, and which looks to Him as Lord and Savior, the Lutheran Minnesota Conference of the Augustana Church has had a portion of the work that He commissioned His followers to do: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing . . . and teaching . . ."

From a small beginning of 13 congregations in 1858 the Conference had grown to 91 congregations at the end of 1875. Thirty pastors were engaged in the task of proclaiming the gospel to these congregations, and seeking to organize new congregations. The 91 congregations had a total of 10,503 communicant members and 7,660 children, a grand total of 18,163 souls. Each year about a thousand children were baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Each year some 500 were confirmed after instruction in the principles of Christian doctrine as set forth in Luther's Catechism. Each year some 700 or 800 adults were received into the Church's fellowship.

In the number of congregations the Minnesota Conference was the largest of four conferences which then constituted the Augustana Church. In point of total membership it was exceeded by the Illinois Conference.

During the fourth quarter of the 19th century, as the stream of immigration from Sweden to America reached its highest point, the Minnesota Conference had its era of most rapid growth and expansion. By 1880 it was the largest conference in the Augustana Church, both in the number of congregations and in total membership. The growth of the Conference in this period of its history is a part of the story of American westward migration and settlement, a story of work and sacrifice and hardships, and at the same time a story of exuberant joy and success, a planting and a building where no man had previously planted or built.

The number of new congregations received into the Conference in these 25 years was 268. For each lustrum the figures are as follows: 1876-1880, 30 new congregations; 1881-85, 58; 1886-90, 64; 1891-95, 60; 1896-1900, 56. The largest number in one year was 20 in 1886. These congregations were scattered over a territory which included Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, the northwestern part of Wisconsin, and four Canadian provinces, Ontario, Manitoba, Assiniboia (now southern Saskatchewan), and Alberta.

Generally small when started, some congregations remained small, and a few had merely an ephemeral existence. The total number belonging to the Conference in 1900 was 339. Many of the older congregations and some of the younger ones were growing vigorously during this period, but the average size of the congregations in 1900 was 113 communicants compared with 115 in 1875. The total number of communicant members in the Conference increased from 10,503 in 1875 to 38,305 in 1900, an average increase of 10.5 per cent per year. The baptized membership increased from 18,163 to 66,125, which also represents an average increase of 10.5 per cent per year. The largest congregation in the Conference in 1900 was the Chisago Lake Church, Center City, with 2,281 baptized members. First Augustana Church, Minneapolis, was second, with 1,647 baptized members.

The number of pastors in the Conference increased from 33 in 1875 to 140 in 1900. Thus the average number of members served by each pastor in 1875 was 550, and in 1900, 472. Only 30 of the pastors in 1900 were serving one-church parishes. Most of them had three or more congregations, and often additional mission fields, to look after.

Though the number of pastors increased almost fourfold the shortage of men for the task was keenly felt. The large, well established rural or village congregations were quite adequately served, but the scattered, small congregations in the Red River Valley, in Wisconsin, on the Dakota prairies, and in Canada, had to be content with intermittent and irregular services, and the urban pastors were unable to cope with the problem of reaching the thousands of new city residents, to say nothing of ministering to the transient immigrants.

The advance of the missionaries of Christ in the Minnesota Conference was not a victorious march with banners unfurled, as the song writers would picture the campaign of the Christian soldiers. Only in retrospect can we see something of the epic and the heroic in the story. For those engaged in it the battle was usually a prosaic struggle against poverty, bad roads, severe weather conditions, poor health, slow and difficult transportation, and often a discouraging indifference on the part of the people.

There were few "professional" home missionaries or circuit riders. Most of the pastors who belonged to the Conference served for longer or shorter periods on the fringes where new congregations were being started. Outstanding for length of service were S. J. Kronberg and L. P. Lundgren, each of whom spent thirty years on the mission field in the Red River Valley; Louis Johnson, who served 28 years in that region; and L. P. Stenstrom, almost 40 years in one parish; J. O. Cavallin, who served nineteen years in North Dakota; and J. D. Nelsenius who served sixteen years in northern Wisconsin. Many others spent five or ten years in the organizing and developing of new missions. Almost every pastor in the Conference spent a month's "vacation" each year on the home mission fields. The importance of this last mentioned plan can hardly be overemphasized. Many small and scattered parishes received at least a little attention in this way when they could not secure a regular pastor. Many new settlements were reached, and in many instances such visits led to the establishment of new congregations.

In the latter half of the seventies the veteran Peter Beckman, stationed in Kandiyohi county, organized Strombeck, Montevideo (now merged with Salem); Svea (now Calvary) Alexandria; Bethany, Starbuck; and First, Lake Lillian. N. J. Brink organized First, Rush City. L. A. Hocanzon organized First, Worthington; and Christdala, Millersburg. J. Alm organized Nylunda, Howard Lake; and Götalund (now Christ Lutheran), Maple Plain. Fredrik Peterson organized Swan Lake, Dassel; and Ansgarius, Wood River, Wisconsin.

Congregations were established during this period also at Prairie Island, near Welch; Star Prairie and River Falls, Wisconsin; Elizabeth, Battle Lake, and Pelican Rapids, all in Ottertail County; Rice Lake, near Braham; Valley Springs, South Dakota; and a little rural congregation near Fargo, the first Augustana congregation in North Dakota (then part of Dakota Territory). The congregation was given the name Maple Sheyenne, from the fact that the community was near the confluence of the Maple and the Sheyenne Rivers. This was the first Swedish settlement in the northern part of Dakota Territory. It was begun by young men, some of whom had come out there as laborers on the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1871. August P. Landblom and Hans Hoglund came together in 1871 from McGregor, Iowa. J. F. Boman, who came in 1872, was one of a group from northern Sweden, and John O. Holsten, who left Sweden in 1869 and came to Dakota in 1871, was a leader of a group from the south. Others among the early immigrants were Nils Olson, 1870; Nils Pehrson, 1873; F. J. Boman and Elias Boman, 1876. Landblom, Olson, and Pehrson were married and had families. Of the early experiences of the settlers Mrs. J. F. Boman, who as a bride was one of the few women of the settlement, has reported: "We crossed the Red River for the first time in 1872, I then being 27 years of age, and settled on a homestead six miles west of Fargo. There were very few settlers in the neighborhood . . . All that existed of Fargo at that time was the name. The N. P. Railroad was built through there the same summer. We lived on the farm for two years before we could manage to have any garden, as we could not yet afford to get the horses and necessary utensils for farming. In '74 we went about 14 miles north to work for a farmer, cutting hay with a scythe, until we earned enough to buy ourselves a pair of oxen, a cow and a heifer . . ." [1]

These early settlers wrote to friends in Sweden, telling of their new homes in the Red River Valley, and the result was that 104 adults born in Sweden came to this original Swedish colony in North Dakota. Only 11 of these had lived in some other state before coming to Dakota.[2]

The Minnesota Conference asked Rev. J. P. Mattson, stationed near Detroit Lakes, to visit the new settlement in Dakota. On February 5, 1878 he organized the Maple Sheyenne congregation. Two years elapsed before regular pastoral care was provided. The Conference tried to find a pastor willing to go to the Fargo-Moorhead area, but the efforts were in vain until in the early part of 1880 when Rev. A. F. Tornell of Stillwater accepted a temporary call and spent seven weeks there. During this time he organized a congregation in Fargo. J. O. Cavallin, stationed as pastor of the Spring Garden congregation near Cannon Falls, accepted a call to Fargo. He found that the newly organized congregation consisted of Swedes living on both sides of the Red River, the majority of them on the Minnesota side, in Moorhead. Plans for getting a church were soon under consideration, and the Moorhead people decided that it should be in their city. An old school building was for sale, and the congregation bought it for $2,500.00. But in order to close the deal the congregation had to change its name, and since it was not yet incorporated the only action necessary was to call a special meeting and vote on it. On December 28, 1880, the name of the Fargo congregation was changed to "Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Bethesda Church in Moorhead, Minnesota." Cavallin established his home in Moorhead and served as pastor of the parish ten years, devoting about one-third of his time to mission work in North Dakota and the Red River Valley. In the spring of 1881 he undertook a trip north to Hallock, visiting several places on the way. He found Swedes in many places, but because of flood conditions in the valley he was unable to have services anywhere except in Warren. His reports to the Conference told of wild speculation in Fargo and Moorhead, crass materialism, drunkenness, and little thought for God and His Word. Fargo had suddenly become a city of 5,000, and mission work should be done there too, since few of the Swedes came over to church in Moorhead. "The picture is so dark that I cannot describe it."[3]

As travelling missionary in Dakota, Cavallin found more than enough to do. He visited Bismarck and nearby places in 1881, and other scattered settlements of Swedish people. But he found that the work in Moorhead suffered when he was away from there. People coming for the first time to attend services found the church closed on Sunday, and never came again, according to a statement in one of his reports.[4]

Cavallin, however, was not easily discouraged. He was optimistic about the Red River Valley and its possibilities, and became a guide to many incoming Swedish settlers. An enterprising immigrant agent in St. Paul sent him a Northern Pacific Railway Company pass and told him to use it as much as possible. He soon became acquainted with all the towns along the N. P. and was able to tell the Swedish newcomers where to find government land in proximity to other Swedish settlers.[5]

Swedish immigration to North Dakota did not reach into high figures. In 1900 there were 8,619 foreign born Swedes in the state, every county having at least a few. Cass County (Fargo) had 1,262, and only three other counties had as many as 500. These were Barnes with 611, Grand Forks with 535, and Sargent with 506.[6]

Cavallin seems to have been enthusiastic about Dakota. The flat, broad fields reminded him of his old home in Skåne, Sweden. But other pastors who came to share the missionary labors with him were less pleased. Rev. Svante Udden, who spent the years 1888 to 1892 in North Dakota, serving the small settlements in Barnes, Steele, Griggs, Sargent, LaMoure, Burleigh, Stutsman, Eddy, Benson, and Cass counties, said, some years later: "Things did not look promising in North Dakota at that time. In many of our Swedish settlements, only about half of the original settlers were left; the rest had left the country, as it seemed, in despair or disgust. The far greater part of those that were left had a very hard struggle to live, but they were hopeful and persistent. Many were living in dugouts, sod huts, or cellars, but the minister was always a welcome guest to the kind of houses that they had . . ."[7]

Rev. Alfred Bergin relates the following concerning his experiences and impressions in the state, 1893-1898: "I lived at Sanborn and served one church at Hobart, four miles east; one at Valley City, 12 miles east; one at Svea, 15 miles south; one at Griswold, about 30 miles north; and one at Sherbrook, about 50 miles north. Summer and winter I drove with my ponies over the prairies, often even to the charges in the northern part of the state. But I could, however, reach these places by taking the train to Cooperstown and there the parishioners met me and took me back to the station. I also made occasional visits to Jamestown, Carrington, Sheyenne, and was a passenger on the first train to Maddock . . . The houses were many miles apart and the peculiar lonesomeness of the plains did not agree with my romantic nature. Often did I recite to myself the last verse of Bryant's poem, 'The Indian at the Burial Place of His Fathers':

'The plains they killed our tribes to get
May be a barren desert yet.'"[8]

By the end of the 19th century 21 congregations had been organized in North Dakota. First Lutheran, Bismarck, was organized in 1883 under Cavallin's leadership. Nebo, Valley City, was begun in 1890; Elim, Fargo, in 1891; Augustana, Sheyenne, in 1896; other small congregations were found in Steele, Burleigh, Barnes, Sargent, Cass, Bottineau, Wells, Emmons, and Grand Forks counties. The total baptized membership was 1,492 in 1900.

Suggestions were made as early as 1896 that the Red River Valley become a separate conference. Cavallin (then pastor of Zion and Salem churches, Minneapolis) had visited the scenes of his former labors, and by appointment of the Conference president he had installed pastors in Moorhead, Maple Sheyenne, and the Detroit Lakes parish. Following this visit he wrote: "The Red River Valley and North Dakota is a most important field for our church . . . It is my definite and firm opinion that this field should immediately become a Conference by itself. The Minnesota Conference can get along better without that region up there, and those who are up there can work with greater success if they have a Conference organization. As it is now most of those congregations will be strangers to our Conference and Synod for they can seldom send delegates to our conventions."[9]

A movement in that direction was begun, but the feeling in the congregations was divided. Rev. L. P. Lundgren wrote early in 1897 to Norelius, then Conference president: "You know the RRV pastors desire division of the Conference. The congregations were to write to me and send their official request, or their rejection of the proposition, but . . . only 13 congregations have expressed themselves on the question, seven for and six against." A few days later an official request was sent to the Conference by Lundgren, veteran pastor at Hallock and then president of the Red River District: "Whereas the pastors of the Red River District adopted a resolution regarding division of the Minnesota Conference and several congregations have voted for it at their annual meetings, therefore I wish to present herewith, on behalf of the District, the request that this question . . . be taken up at the convention in Minneapolis . . ." [10]

There is no reference to the matter in the Conference Minutes for 1897. A dozen years passed before the Conference gave formal consideration to the question of establishing a conference in the Red River Valley. In the meantime the Minnesota Conference continued its efforts to get pastors or students to North Dakota, but usually with little success. One of the pastors on the executive committee complained bitterly: "It is amazing how the missionary spirit is dying out in so many of our pastors. Whoever one writes to with a request that they go out and spend a month or two on the mission field, gives nothing but a point blank 'No!' No one wants to deny himself, sacrifice, give, and suffer anything for Christ's poor church, but most of them seek after ease and comfort and pleasure trips to foreign lands or to a summer cottage by some delightful woodland lake in the beauty of nature." [11]

In the fall of that year (1900) L. G. Almen, the vice president of the Conference, made an inspection tour of North Dakota and found prospects not very bright in Fargo. In Bismarck, he said, it was pitiful. The congregation consisted of two families, a few widows, and a very few young folks, 18 communicants altogether. "Wherever one goes there is complaint and dissatisfaction with the way the church work has been done. Generally they are asking the Mission Board to send students instead of pastors, since they satisfy the demands of the people in general better than do the pastors who have been sent there." [12]

L. W. Gullstrom served in North Dakota a period of nine years, from 1899 to 1902 in Valley City, and from 1902 to 1908 in Bismarck. At times he was the only resident pastor in the entire district. He complained of lack of financial support. The Mission Board reduced the aid from $150.00 to $100.00 per year in 1900, and Valley City, which had promised $150.00, had paid him only $43.00. [13]

He continued to plead for more aid and more workers, "for the field is large and important . . . Land here (around Valley City) is quite expensive, so one cannot expect much immigration from other places. But there are many children and young people in the congregations . . . The old people now own from half a section to two or three sections apiece, to divide among the children, so we may expect that the growing generation will stay. The Conference should not fear that its mission work here is in vain. I think that, in time, we shall have self-sustaining congregations here . . . My regular salary from the parish is $475.00, of which $30.00 goes for fare to Hofva. I get practically nothing extra . . . I instructed the confirmation class in Hobart 42 times, driving nine miles each time, and I received nothing when I finished. Last winter I spent $82.00 for hay and feed for my team, and horseshoeing, etc., cost $15.00 . . . I am now $200 deeper in debt than when I was in Texas."[14]

Cavallin had left Moorhead and the North Dakota missions in 1890 to serve other parishes, but in 1906 he was back again, and gave nine years of service as travelling missionary. He continued to show enthusiasm about North Dakota, and in his final report to the Conference (1916) he stated that his work there had been a pleasure. However, the growth had been slow. When he resigned in 1915, to retire from the ministry, there were 28 Augustana congregations in North Dakota. The total number of baptized members in all the 28 congregations was 3,066. The largest one was Augustana, Sheyenne, with 301.[15]

In the meantime the activity on the Minnesota side of the Red River had been progressing somewhat more rapidly. During the eighties and the nineties congregations were organized as follows in the respective counties of the area: Pope, 1; Grant, 1; Douglas, 3; Todd, 3; Ottertail, 6; Clay, 2; Becker, 3; Norman, 2; Polk, 14; Marshall, 7; Kittson, 7; Roseau, 3; total, 52.

The veteran pastor, Peter Sjöblom, who served a number of years as Conference president and also for a time as vice president of the Synod, was stationed in Fergus Falls, 1887-1894, and served as home missionary in the surrounding region.

Louis Johnson, from the time of his ordination in 1879, served in the Red River Valley until his retirement in 1907, in the Oscar Lake parish, the Parkers Prairie parish, and Fergus Falls. He was a man without much formal education, but what he lacked in scholastic attainments was largely compensated by his zeal and devotion to the cause of home missions.

James Moody, a graduate of Augustana College and Theological

Seminary, gave 36 years of pastoral service in five parishes of the Red River Valley: Crookston, St. Hilaire, Black River, and Park Ridge (now Thief River Falls), 1888-1897; Eagle Lake and Amor, 1897-1906; Fergus Falls, 1906-1916; Roseau and Badger, 1916-1919; Detroit Lakes, 1919-1924. When Northwestern College was established in Fergus Falls in 1900, Moody was chairman of the board, and in 1906 he was called to teach at the school. He made a unique contribution to the growth and development of the church in the Red River Valley.

Alfred Melin was pastor of the Alexandria parish from 1890 to 1902.

Rev. Nicolaus Lehart, who served as pioneer missionary in the Fosston parish 1894-1903, has given a graphic account of the struggles with inclement weather and poor roads. A letter written by him to the Conference president in 1896 may be considered typical of the home missionaries' problems in attempting to serve their widely scattered parishes:

"My congregations are: Salem, Town of Knute; New Sweden, Town of Lessor; Asphult, Town of Hill River; Oak Park, Town of Queen; Poplar Lake, Town of Columbia.

"I live in Town of Columbia. Distances from where I live are: To Salem, 18 miles; to New Sweden, 20 miles; to Asphult, 15 miles; to Oak Park, 8 miles; and to the church in Poplar Lake, one and one-half miles. I visit these congregations every third Sunday if no unforeseen hindrances occur. When I preach in Poplar Lake in the morning, I preach in Oak Park in the afternoon, and vice versa. It is nine miles between these places. Before we had a church in Poplar Lake it was over 10 miles. When I preach in Asphult in the forenoon I preach in New Sweden in the afternoon and vice versa. Sometimes when I preach in Salem I visit New Sweden the same day. It is about 10 miles between Asphult and New Sweden and 12 miles between Salem and New Sweden. It is not that far between Salem and New Sweden but the roads are so poor that one must go by way of McIntosh and then it is 12 miles. In winter I preach also on week-days. I then usually go out on Fridays or Saturdays to the congregations and come home on Mondays or Tuesdays. In May five boys were confirmed in Poplar Lake, in June three boys and one girl were confirmed in Salem, in

August one boy and five girls in Asphult, and last Sunday three boys and two girls in Oak Park. These children I have instructed for one and one-half years. I have met with them every week or every other week.

"In Asphult I missed only one service. I had been there oftener than usual in March and the first part of April, then I told them I would not come for six weeks because it was too wet, and I had to have one free Sunday, May 17, for I was in Crookston on May 16 and helped myself and others to get homesteads. I could not get home until Sunday morning. If a service had been announced that day it would have been cancelled, for it rained all day Saturday and Sunday so the water was running in streams. On Easter Monday I was in Hill River and Asphult. On the second Sunday after Easter I was there again. That time I could not drive but I walked . . . The third Sunday after Easter I was in Salem. The fourth Sunday after Easter I was in New Sweden. I went by train to McIntosh and walked seven miles from McIntosh. The roads were impassable. On the fifth Sunday after Easter I preached in Poplar Lake in the forenoon. I should have preached in Oak Park in the afternoon, where many had assembled, but I dared not drive and I had no time to walk nine miles, wherefore I stayed home. But the people did not complain, for they knew I did all I could. On the sixth Sunday after Easter I was free, as I have stated. On Saturday before Pentecost I went by train to McIntosh, from there on foot to Salem. They met me in McIntosh and showed me the way. There was so much water that one could not even go on foot on the usual wagon road, as I found out on Monday when returning to McIntosh. I tried to follow the road but almost got mired down. About noon I came to McIntosh, wet up to the middle. Instead of waiting for the train which came at 10:00 P.M., I walked to Fosston, where I stayed over night. On Trinity Sunday I had planned to go to Asphult in the forenoon and to New Sweden in the afternoon. But the roads were impassable and bridges washed out. So that day I had services in Oak Park in the forenoon and Poplar Lake in the afternoon."[16]

Various suggestions for the organizing of a conference in the northwestern part of Minnesota and North Dakota had been made from time to time, but for a number of years they were turned aside by the Minnesota Conference authorities because "this is not the right time for division of the Conference." It was not so much a question of whether the Conference should be divided, but rather a question of the boundary lines. The Minnesota Conference did not readily want to give up such promising congregations as those in Alexandria, Fergus Falls, Moorhead, and other cities of the Red River Valley. The separation was accomplished, but not without some feeling of discontent.

Dr. J. A. Krantz, president of the Conference, in his annual report to the 1909 convention, mentioned that two districts had requested division of the Conference. (The two districts are not named in the report, nor elsewhere in the Minutes of 1909.) Krantz stated that he had become convinced of the need for division, and he urged that it be along state lines, so that North Dakota, South Dakota, and Canada each would become separate conferences.

The Conference elected a committee to study the matter. Each of the 18 districts was represented by a pastor and a layman, and each institution had one representative. The Conference president was to serve as chairman.[17]

The report of this committee was presented to the Conference in 1910. It is not found in the minutes, but the minutes merely state that it suggested the division of the Minnesota Conference into three conferences, with certain well defined boundaries, and that Canada also be organized as a Conference. After an hour's discussion of this burning issue an informal vote was taken to see where the delegation stood. This showed that 152 favored division and 146 were against. During the continued debate it began to appear that the consensus was that the Conference ought to be divided, not in the way which the committee had proposed, but so that the geographical boundaries of the state, as far as possible, should coincide with the Conference boundaries. At last the following resolution was adopted by a large majority: Resolved that the Conference remain undivided, but that the Conference encourage congregations far removed from the center of the Conference to seek agreement on the matter of organizing themselves as new conferences and submit their requests to the Conference.[18]

Pastors and lay delegates from the Red River, North Dakota, Fargo, and Alexandria Districts attending the Conference convention in Stillwater in February, 1911, met and formulated a petition asking that they might form a new conference. The president of the Conference, J. A. Krantz, refused to recognize the petition, and he was upheld by the convention, on the grounds that the petition had not been formulated in accordance with the Conference resolution of 1910.[19]

After being thus turned down by the Conference, the four districts proceeded to organize in spite of it. At a meeting held in the Bethesda Lutheran Church, Moorhead, April 4 and 5, 26 pastors and 53 lay delegates voted to establish a new conference, which should begin to function "immediately after the next convention of the Minnesota Conference." Rev. N. Lehart, Lake Park, was temporary chairman of the meeting, after which Rev. E. M. Eriksson, Holmes City, was elected president. Rev. P. E. Ording, Fahlun-Spruce Hill parish, was the secretary. Dr. Krantz, president, and Dr. G. Rast, treasurer, of the Minnesota Conference, were present, and were given the privilege of the floor. A committee was elected, consisting of August Clauson, Kennedy; Rev. S. W. Swenson, Rev. N. Lehart, and Rev. J. E. Liljedahl, to bring in suggestions for a name for the new conference. The closing session of the meeting was held in Elim Lutheran Church, Fargo.[20] (Clauson was the man who suggested the name, "Red River Valley," for the new conference.)

Two days after the close of the meeting a personal report was sent to the president of the Synod, Eric Norelius: ". . . The Conference will be divided. You know that this matter interests me greatly, since I, 14 years ago, was the one who originated the petition which was laid before the Conference with request for a separation . . . Both Krantz and Rast were present at this meeting and saw a unity in this matter which they had never dreamed of . . . Your letters to Lehart and Hedenstrom were read at the meeting and . . . contributed not a little to the result." [21]

Lehart had written to Norelius and asked whether the proponents of the new conference could bypass the Minnesota Conference and go directly to the Synod with their petition for recognition.[22] This, however, was not done. A petition was submitted to the Conference in 1912, asking that the Alexandria, Fargo, and Red River Districts be given a recommendation to the Synod for the establishment of a new conference. (The North Dakota District had voted on June 29, 1911 to remain in the Minnesota Conference.) Krantz, in his annual report, urged postponement of the question concerning division. He said that since the North Dakota District has voted to stay with the Minnesota Conference, and the one man in the Big Stone District who was personally interested (C. G. Erickson) had moved to another conference, and since there are various opinions in the Alexandria and the Red River Districts, the new conference would be only "a little wedge." (It is possible that Krantz was indulging in a bit of sly humor when he used the word "wedge." In Swedish, which was the language of his report, the word for wedge is "kil." And "Mr. Kil" was the nickname for J. O. Cavallin, presumably derived from Kilhult, the name of his birthplace in Sweden.)

But in spite of the president's opinions the Conference granted the petition for the establishment of a new conference, with the following boundaries: On the east, the eastern boundary line of Beltrami, Hubbard, Wadena, and Todd counties; on the south, the south boundary line of Todd, Douglas, Grant, and Wilkin counties, and Norunga in Pope County; on the west, the state line, with the exception of the congregations in North Dakota which belong to the Red River and Fargo Districts; on the north, the Canadian border.[23]

The Synod approved the formation of the new conference, and the official organization meeting was held in Fergus Falls May 24-27, 1912. Sixteen pastors and 26 laymen were present. Rev. S. W. Swenson, Evansville, was elected president; Rev. James Moody, Fergus Falls, vice president; Rev. Alex Sand, St. Hilaire, secretary; and Mr. August Lundgren, Warren, treasurer.[24]

At its inception the Red River Valley Conference consisted of 91 congregations, served by 26 pastors. The membership totaled 11,386, with 6,865 communicants. After the division the Minnesota Conference had 336 congregations, 149 pastors, 47,783 communicants, 72,194 baptized members.[25]

In 1941 the congregations in North Dakota, which in 1911 had voted to stay with the Minnesota Conference, were transferred to the Red River Valley Conference. This gave the Red River Valley Conference an addition of 27 congregations, eight pastors, 2,436 communicants, 3,429 baptized members.[26]

NOTES

[1] Bemis, Myrtle, "History of the Settlement of Swedes in North Dakota" in *Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota,* Vol. III, 1910. 264f.

[2] *op. cit.,* 265.

[3] Bemis, Myrtle, *op. cit.* 267; *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll,* 1880; J. O. Cavallin to Executive Committee of Minn. Conf., May 28, 1881 and October 1, 1881, MSS; G. A. Wahlquist to Executive Committee of Minnesota Conference, April 20, 1880 (the latter date is evidently an error, and should have been 1881).

[4] Bemis, Myrtle, *op. cit.,* 268; J. O. Cavallin to Executive Committee of Minn. Conf., Oct. 1, 1881.

[5] Bemis, Myrtle, *op. cit.,* 285.

[6] *op. cit.,* 306.

[7] *op. cit.,* 303.

[8] *op. cit.,* 303f.

[9] J. O. Cavallin to E. Norelius, Sept. 21, 1896 MS Aug.

[10] L. P. Lundgren to E. Norelius, Jan. 19, 1897, Feb. 1, 1897 MS.

[11] J. O. Lundberg to P. Sjöblom, Aug. 21, 1900 MS.

[12] L. G. Almen to P. Sjöblom, Oct. 5, 1900 MS.

[13] L. W. Gullstrom to P. Sjöblom, Aug. 2, 1900 MS.

[14] L. W. Gullstrom to J. Fremling, Aug. 8, 1901 MS.

[15] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* 1916, 39f.; 1912, Statistical reports.

[16] N. Lehart to E. Norelius, Sept. 1, 1896 MS.

[17] *Minn.-Konf. Referat,* 1909, 47f, 55, 132f.

[18] *Minn.-Konf. Referat,* 1910, 107.

[19] *Minn.-Konf. Referat,* 1911, 117f.

[20] *Red River Volley Konf. Referat,* 1911, 5ff.

[21] J. A. Nyvall to E. Norelius, Apr. 7, 1911, MS Aug. Nyvall had served as pastor in Moorhead but had demitted the ministry in 1910 at the insistence of the Conference President. In a letter written in May, 1911 he thanks Norelius for giving him more sympathetic treatment than Krantz and others had given him.

[22] N. Lehart to E. Norelius, March 28, 1911 MS Aug.

[23] *Minn.-Konf. Referat,* 1912, 34, 111.

[24] *Red River Valley Konf. Referat,* 1912, 14ff.

[25] *Aug.-Synod Prot.* 1913, Statistical reports.

[26] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* 1940, 46; 1941, 24; statistical tables. The Red River Valley Conference published, in 1953, a history written by Pastor J. Edor Larson. It is a volume of 167 pages, with notes and a bibliography.

Chapter III

The Prairie Provinces

Pamphlets depicting Canada as "the land of the future" were being distributed by immigration agents working in Sweden as early as 1873. Special emphasis was given to the friendliness of the government towards the immigrants who wanted to become farmers. They would receive not only free land, but also horses and implements, from the government, and thus were almost assured of quick progress towards the goal of becoming well-to-do home owners. It was natural that this would appeal to many in straitened circumstances who longed for a better economic position. But the climate was frightening, since Canada reached "all the way to the North Pole." The people from northern countries, used to snow and ice, were not afraid to try it. Those who came over to Canada wrote to friends and relatives that they should come, and so the immigration to Canada was under way. The difficulty was how to reach western Canada, where the opportunities were to be found. But this problem was solved when the Canadian Pacific railroad in 1880-82 reached Winnipeg, Manitoba, and continued on westward. Many Swedes came from the United States and after a time became residents of Canada. Winnipeg was the central point at first, but as the railroads were extended the immigrant stream spread to Saskatchewan and Alberta.

The mission work of the Minnesota Conference in Canada began when Rev. Peter Sjöblom received a letter from Mrs. Tobias B. Nelson in Winnipeg, asking him to send a Swedish Lutheran pastor to Winnipeg to preach the Word of God and perform pastoral services. This request was turned over to Rev. L. A. Hocanzon, who was then serving as travelling missionary in the Red River Valley. In the summer of 1883 he went to Winnipeg, and succeeded in gathering some of his countrymen for a worship service one Sunday evening in a little Methodist church. The following year a few visits were made by Rev. Hocanzon's successor (name unknown). In 1885 the Conference, at its meeting in West Union, Carver County, Minnesota, took up the question of mission work in Canada. But, since the Conference was nothing but one great mission field, it dared not take on another field as huge as Canada. The Conference therefore referred the matter to the Synod, which resolved to begin mission work in Canada. A pastor was called for this purpose, but the call was declined. The Macedonian cry "Come over and help us" could not be silenced. At the Synod in Minneapolis in 1886 the matter of mission work in Canada was turned over to the Minnesota Conference.

Because of lack of funds and workers nothing was done until 1888, when Rev. S. Udden was called to make an investigation of the field. His journey took him to Rat Portage (now Kenora) on the east, and as far west as Medicine Hat. His report to the Conference showed a rather small number of Swedes in Canada, in scattered settlements far apart:

"Having spent six weeks travelling in Manitoba and Canada, according to the assignment given me by the executive committee, to find out the conditions among our countrymen and the need of mission work here, I wish to report as follows:

"First I stayed in Winnipeg a few weekdays and one Sunday, partly to learn about conditions there, and also to arrange for reduced fare, and to work out an itinerary for my trip. The number of Swedes in the city is about 400, and these are for the most part permanent residents. The Mission Friends have worked here quite zealously ever since our Church laid down its work five years ago. The fruit of their labors is a little congregation of 20 members and a little church, which soon will be debt-free. The great mass of our people therefore have no church affiliation. The congregation here has no connection with any church body. This fact, however, is only a formality, in order to win more general support. They have therefore succeeded in winning the better elements, especially since there has been no other mission work.

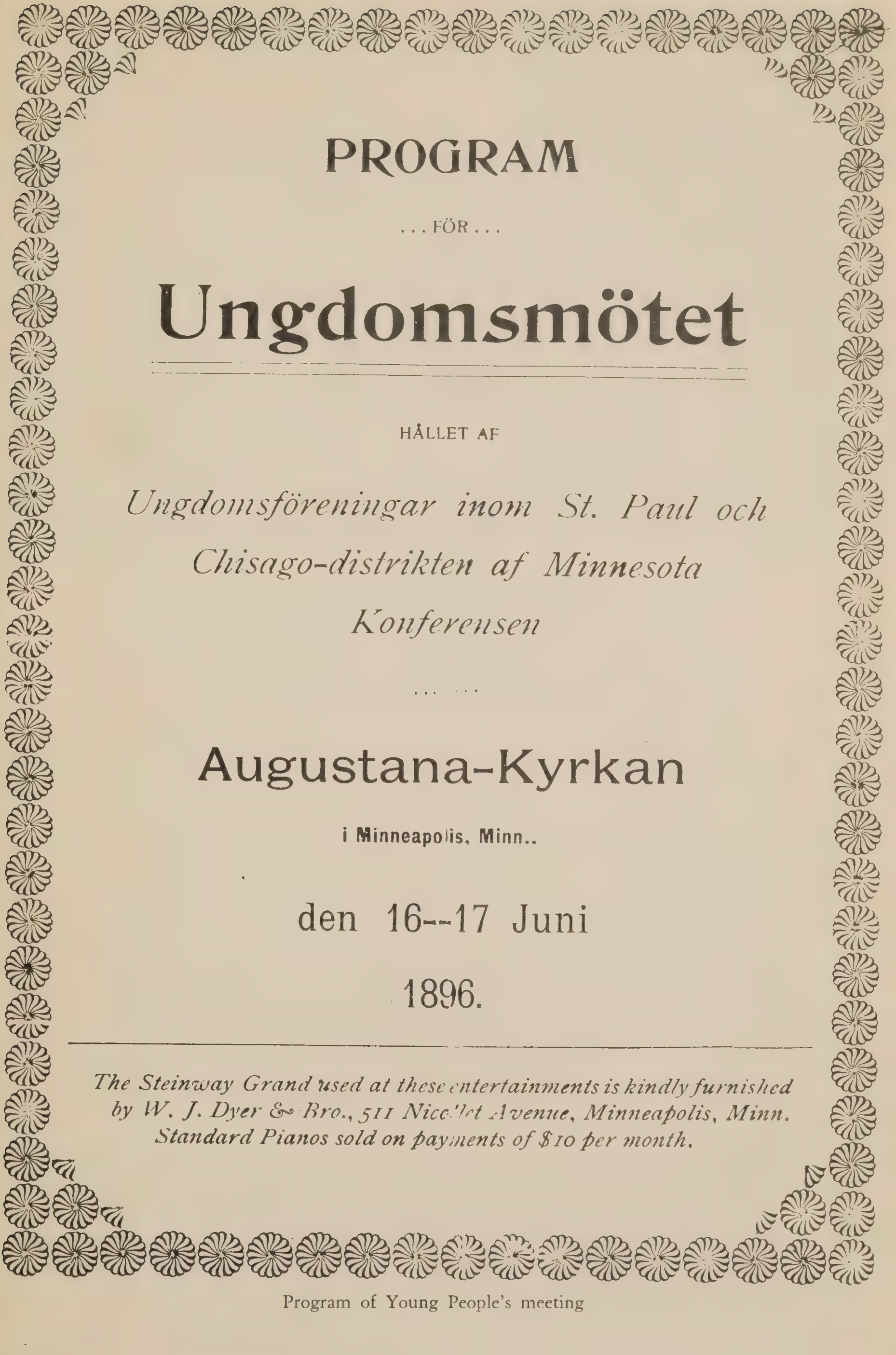
Outside of the congregation I have not found much of any churchly element, although many desire to see Lutheran mission work and a congregation here. I was respectfully invited to preach in the church on Sunday, which I also did.

"Unless the city gets new establishments that will offer more employment than at present, there is little reason to expect any increase in the number of Swedes. However, this city is important as an immigration point, and as the center of the province, and laborers who lack employment in winter are naturally drawn to this place.

"A few of the leading men in the above mentioned congregation have banded themselves together under the name 'Northwestern Scandinavian Mission Society.' This society, which according to information given to me privately by one of the officers, is really Congregational, has set as its aim to provide for the spiritual and churchly needs of our countrymen in Canada. By means of support from Americans the society has been able to send out preachers to visit some of the new settlements. Since the Swedish immigration has obtained a foothold the last two years and since incredible efforts are being put forth to win more of these immigrants it is easy to see the importance of mission work here during the establishment of new colonies. If it is to be as it has been thus far, it will seem that the Swedes in Canada will slowly and imperceptibly be drawn into Congregationalism.

"On the second Sunday I visited Rat Portage, Ontario, 130 miles east of Winnipeg. There and at nearby places are several sawmills and a large flour mill. Here were about 50 Swedes, all laborers. As a place of employment it will surely be of greater importance in the near future.

"On the third Sunday I was at the colony 'New Stockholm,' 20 miles north of the station Whitewood, which is located 250 miles west of Winnipeg, in the province of Assiniboia. There are about 30 new settlers, and the whole population is estimated at about 100. Most of them have come directly from Sweden, and most of them were poor when they came. If the crops will be as they seem to be this year, this attempt at starting a colony will succeed and the number of people will be doubled next year. Most of them were from Ström parish, Jemtland, and were acquainted with Pastor M. Sandell. Several were of a Christian spirit, and heartily devoted to the Lutheran faith and



PROGRAM

... FÖR ...

Ungdomsmötet

HÅLLET AF

Ungdomsföreningar inom St. Paul och
Chisago-distrikten af Minnesota
Konferensen

... ...

Augustana-Kyrkan

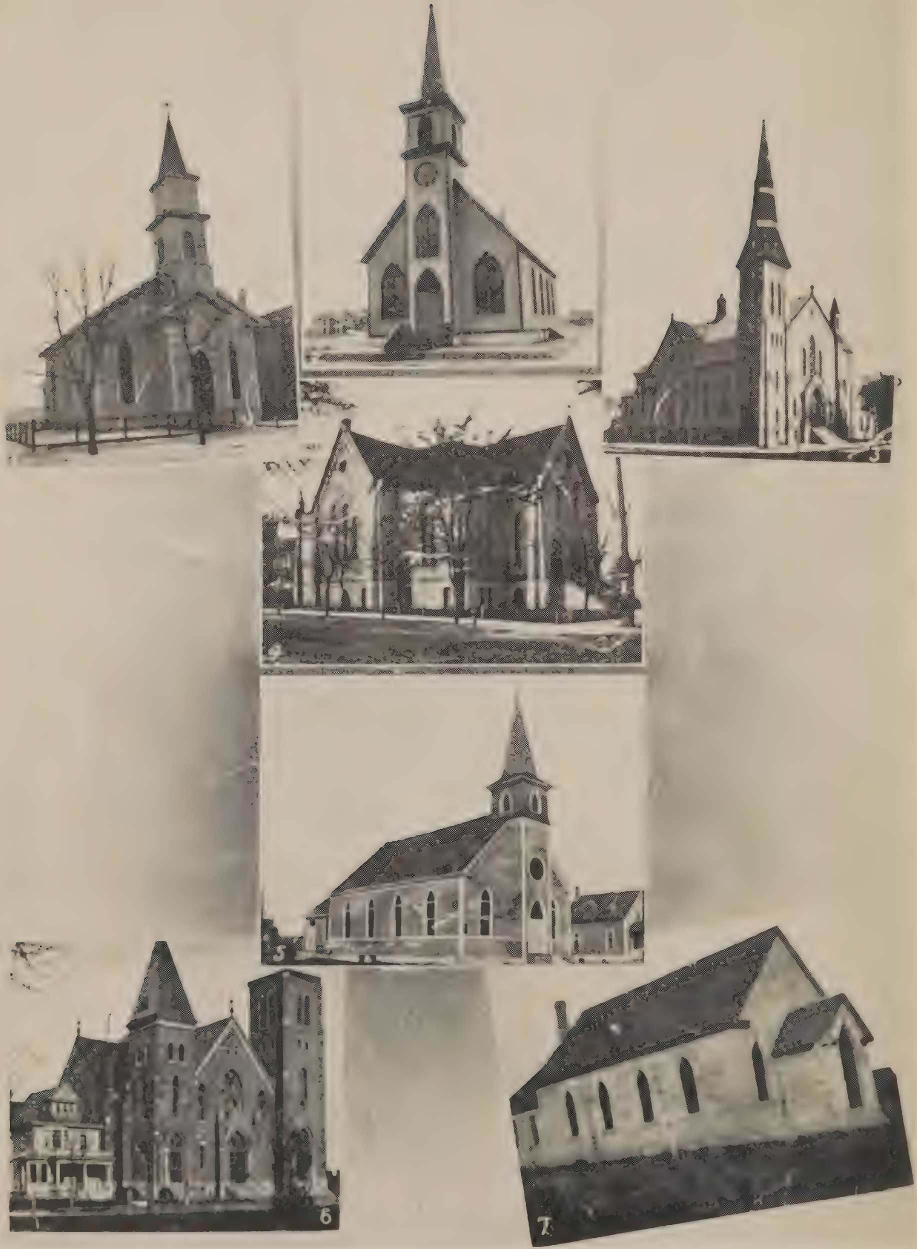
i Minneapolis, Minn..

den 16--17 Juni

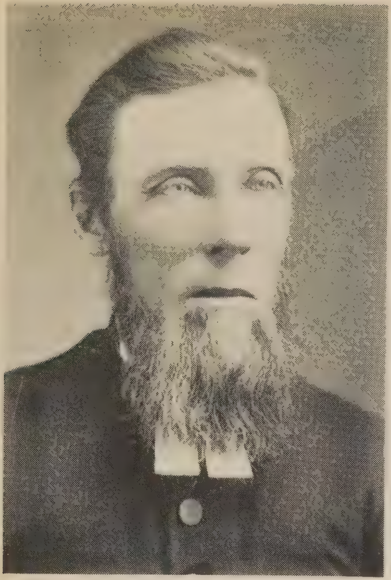
1896.

The Steinway Grand used at these entertainments is kindly furnished by W. J. Dyer & Bro., 511 Nicollet Avenue, Minneapolis, Minn. Standard Pianos sold on payments of $10 per month.

Program of Young People's meeting



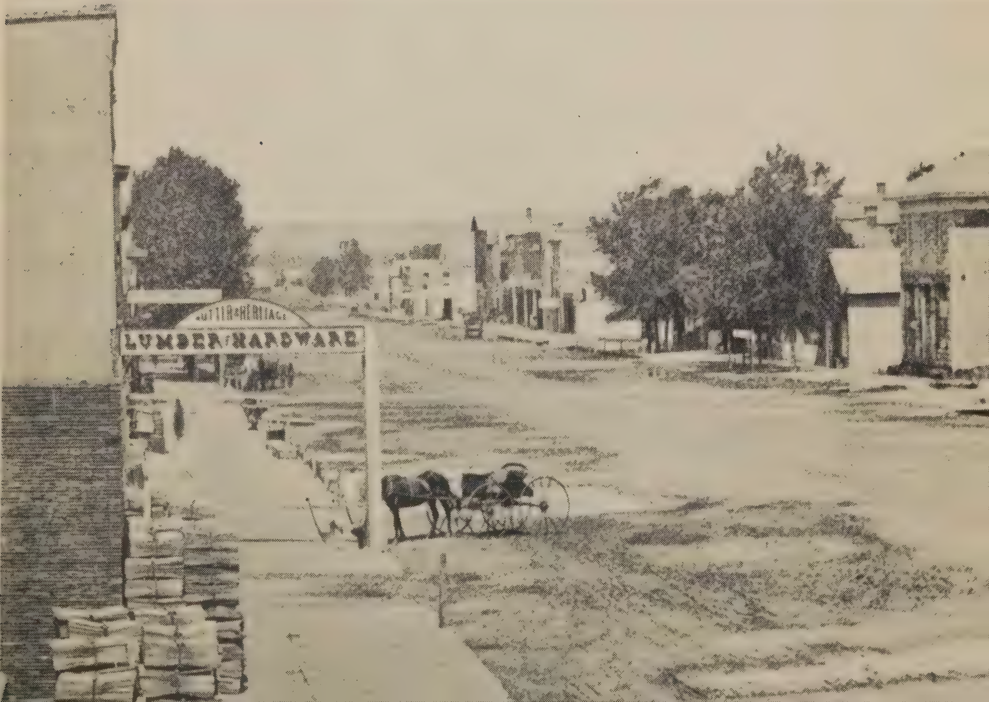
Early Churches in Minneapolis

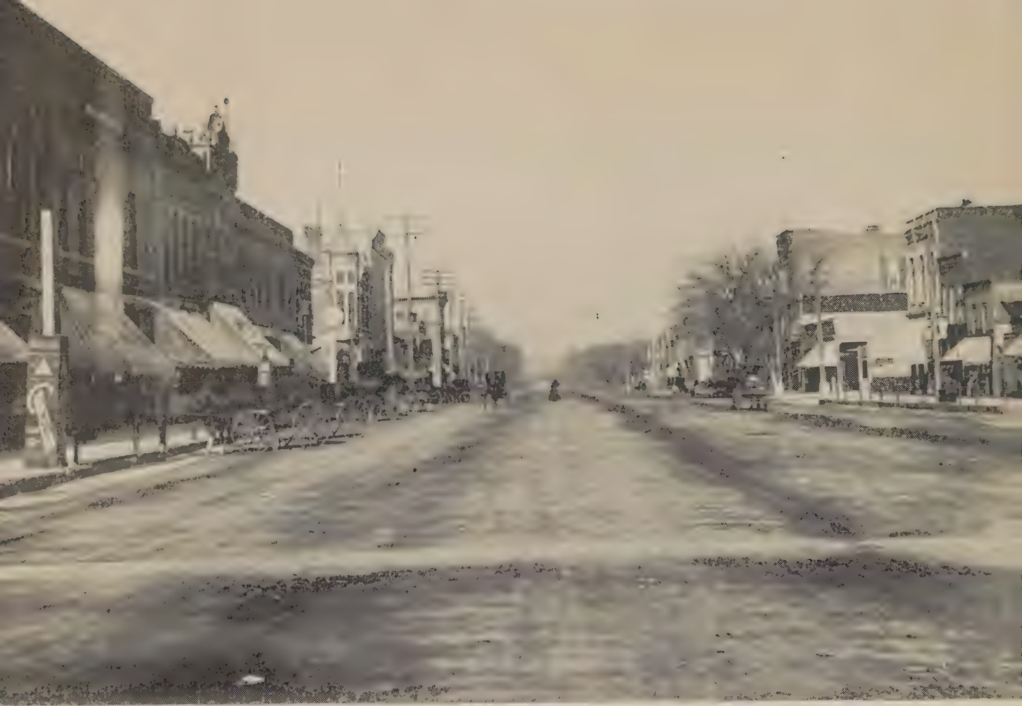


P. J. Eckman

P. A. Mattson

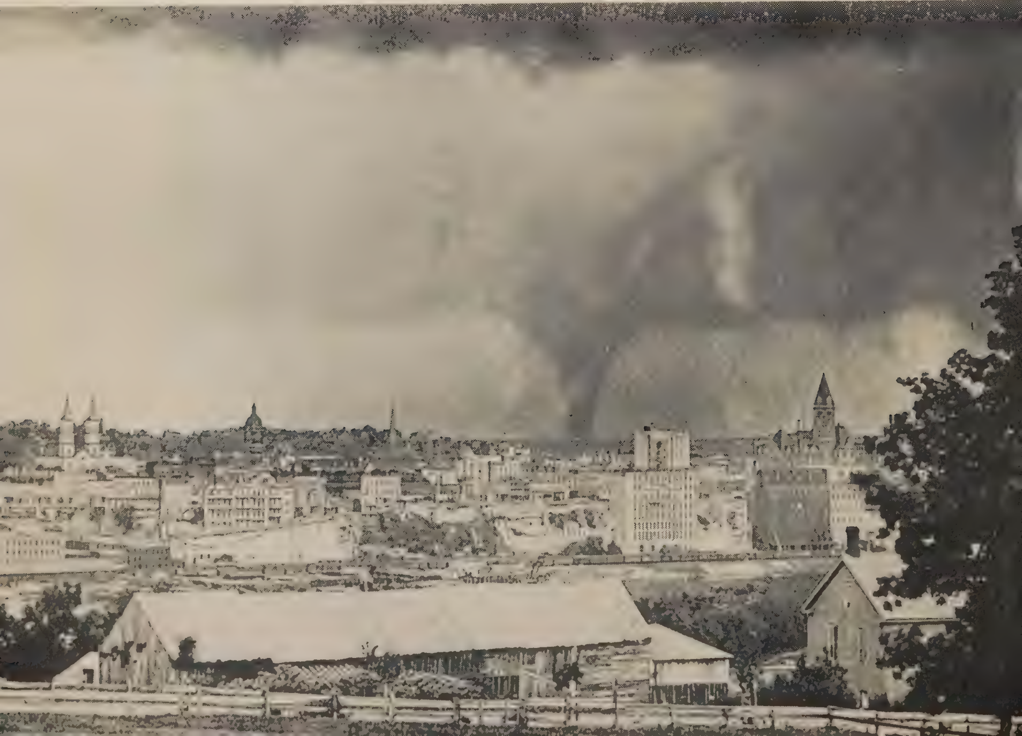
St. Peter about 1876, Minnesota Avenue


LUMBER & HARDWARE



St. Peter, Minnesota Avenue, November 1909, East from First Street east of Court House

Lake Gervais Cyclone, as seen from St. Paul, July 13, 1890



to our Augustana Church. Here the mission society in Winnipeg has really gone to work.

"Since I had understood my assignment to be that I should quite thoroughly investigate the situation I continued my journey farther west. Some time ago I had heard about a Swedish colony at Regina, the capital of Northwest Territory, 100 miles farther west. Now, however, I found no Swedes there. The next place where Swedes were to be found, according to information obtained in Winnipeg, was at Medicine Hat, still 300 miles farther west. Here there were really three places to be investigated, but there were Swedes only at one of them, Dunsmore, where a score of laborers were stationed. There was no new colony, as they spoke of, and as had even been written about in the papers. These few men, however, were quite happy over my visit and to gather around God's Word in the evening.

"On the return trip I stayed over a Sunday at Fleming, 210 miles west of Winnipeg, just at the western border of Manitoba. Here is a new colony of seven or eight settlers, only three miles from the station. Since there still is land to be had at this place there is a possibility that this will become a home for some more Swedes.

"At Oak Lake, 165 miles from Winnipeg, there are two families, one farmer and one section foreman, and a few laborers. A number of Swedes are working as section laborers all along the railroad from here to Winnipeg, about 50 in all.

"At Portage La Prairie, 56 miles from Winnipeg, three families are working for the railroad. This place is said to have a population of 4,000, and as a business center it is undoubtedly second to Winnipeg. From here I went on the Manitoba and Northwestern Railway to Minnedosa, 78 miles northwest, to visit the largest Swedish colony in Canada, New Scandinavia. It lies in the province of Manitoba. On Saturday I had a devotional service in one district of the colony where there are ten new settlers six miles southeast of the town. They do not really belong to the colony for that is 15 to 30 miles straight north from the town. There (in the colony) I had service twice on Sunday, in the north in the forenoon and farther south in the afternoon. Here during the two years since the colony was established, no visit by a preacher had taken place until now a few weeks ago, at the time I had come to Winnipeg. About 75 or 100 settlers have established homes here, and the total population is estimated at about 200, perhaps 300. The people wanted to belong to the Lutheran Church, but did not know of our Augustana Church. With respect to material things, the colony is secure, although most of the people were poor when they came. One, who had been in this country a little longer than the rest and for a time had sort of been the leader of the colony, had a little more to start with and has established a sawmill, which is of great benefit to the colony, for there is an abundance of forest here. I was received with friendliness, yes with gratitude in his large house, and by the people in general, although I had been told that it was questionable whether a preacher would be received at all in the colony.

"Fifteen miles north of Selkirk, up by Lake Winnipeg, there are three or four Swedish families, and at Dufrost, between Emerson and Winnipeg there are a couple of families and a few section laborers. Likewise at Plum Coulee on the southwestern branch of the C.P.R. In fact, most of the section workers along the southwestern branch are Swedes.

"This is, briefly, what I have been able to ascertain. At any rate, the Swedish immigration to Canada has begun, and with a good crop now the second year practically assured, one may be certain that the stream will increase. Now we do not, as a few years ago, have to do mainly with a bunch of wild adventurers and railroad bums, but the kind of people who have come here to settle down and build homes.

"May they not suffer the lack of a spiritual home illuminated by the clear light of God's Word!"[1]

The first Swedish Lutheran congregation in Canada was organized by Rev. J. S. Ryding in New Stockholm, on October 3, 1889. (It was admitted into the Conference in 1892.) This place is in the eastern part of Saskatchewan, approximately 120 miles north of the North Dakota border. Ryding was pastor of the Spring Garden Church in Goodhue County, Minnesota, and was asked by the Conference to visit Canada. The following year the Zion congregation was organized in Winnipeg by Rev. L. G. Almen, who reported that there were 500 Swedes in Winnipeg. In 1891 Rev. Udden made his third visit to Canada, and in 1892 he moved to Winnipeg, becoming the first resident Swedish Lutheran minister in Canada.[2]

At the May meeting of the Conference in 1893 the president, Sjöblom, was able to report that he had dedicated a church in Winnipeg, "the first Swedish Lutheran Church in Canada." However, the Winnipeg congregation was not formally admitted into the Conference until May, 1894. By the end of the century there were congregations organized also at Scandinavia, Tyndall, Whitemouth, and Fleming, Manitoba; Percival, Assiniboia; Battle Lake and Wetaskiwin, Alberta; and Rat Portage, Ontario. The total membership of all the Canadian congregations in 1900 was 796. The largest one was Zion, Winnipeg, with 191 baptized members.[3]

The congregations were scattered over a territory more than 1,500 miles in length. During the nineties economic conditions were depressed. Immigration almost ceased. Udden stayed in Winnipeg until 1898. Several pastors of the Minnesota Conference visited the Canadian field, and theological students gave temporary service to some of the parishes.

A missionary tour in Canada in the midst of winter was reported by Rev. N. Ohslund in 1900. While serving at Soudan, on Minnesota's Vermilion Range, Ohslund was called to the Canadian field, but declined because "it is too expensive to live there." However, he accepted an assignment to visit the missions in Canada, and arrived in Winnipeg on March 2, 1900. Going on to Fleming, Manitoba, on the 3rd he stayed there three days, preaching each day. He found that "the Waldenstromians are trying to make the Lutherans believe that the Synod will take their church if they build one, and that they should build a union church, leaving it open to all preachers. One of the deacons who leads the services has started a Good Templar lodge and half the congregation has joined. After their meetings they dance." The deacon and some others reluctantly confessed after considerable discussion by the pastor, and "in the presence of the whole congregation these men humbled themselves."

Ohslund went on to Whitewood, arriving at 3:00 o'clock in the morning. "At the hotel I had a soiled bed and poor food." In the morning he found a Swedish family who gave him a ride to Percival. There he conducted services four days in succession. He had a public examination of the catechetical class, numbering twenty pupils, only three of whom could read in the "Psalmbok." An earnest admonition was given to the parents. There was dissension in the congregation because of the work of a Mission Covenant preacher.

On March 12 Ohslund got a ride to New Stockholm, and he preached there eight times in the church, and twice in homes. He baptized one child, received seven new members into the congregation, visited homes of members and non-members. Ohslund learned here that a lay preacher sent up to Canada by the Minnesota Conference was alleged to be "a man with two wives," and was accused of other grievous sins. "He has great oratorical abilities, and is sly enough to have gotten the ministerial title and all."

During Ohslund's extended stay in New Stockholm, he examined the church council's minutes, inquired into the moral life of the congregation, and recommended that two deacons should be suspended for drunkenness and other sins.

Returning to Whitewood he preached at an evening service to 15 adults and a few children. One family had come ten miles to attend the service. From there he went to Winnipeg, had two services and Sunday school. He praised the young people, saying they seemed to be very devoted to the church.

"On March 27 I arrived home in the evening, tired and suffering from a cold. I preached 22 times and led three Sunday school sessions. I am sure that some blessing will be the result of this journey."

His expense account for the trip: Railroad fare, $25.85; food and lodging, $1.75; total, $27.60. Collections received: Fleming, $2.30; Percival, $2.60; New Stockholm, $4.65; total, $9.55; balance due from the Conference, $18.05.[4]

Another Canadian missionary journey was reported by Rev. H. S. Chilgren in 1901. He was then stationed at Englund, Marshall county, Minnesota. In his report to the Conference president he spoke of it as "a pleasant journey," from September 25 to November 6.

"On September 29 I arrived in Calgary at 3:00 P.M. but because I did not know the address of any one there I could not have any service. On the 30th I went to Wetaskiwin, and there I received a letter from Student [C. W.] Vetell about the places I should visit. Then I planned my itinerary, wrote letters and announced services.

"On October 1 I went up to Edmonton to call on friends from my congregation, who had moved up there. The only meeting we had was on October 3, when we had a baptism. We had an edifying and pleasant hour. On October 5, I went back to Wetaskiwin and in the afternoon I met with the Sewing Society in Bethlehem congregation. On October 6, services in Wetaskiwin at 10:30 A.M. and 4:00 P.M.

"October 9, services at August Ericksons, eight miles south of Wetaskiwin.

"October 10, service at the schoolhouse at Crooked Lake, ten miles northeast of Wetaskiwin.

"October 12 I went to Red Deer and on Sunday, the 13th, we had services at 10:30 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. This little congregation—Bethel—is 15 miles west of Red Deer.

"October 15 I went to La Combe and had services in the Saron congregation 15 miles east of La Combe on the 17th.

"October 18 I returned to Wetaskiwin, and on the 19th with horse and wagon 25 miles southeast to the Svea congregation at Battle Lake. On the 20th, services at Svea, 10:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. October 21, service at Svea, 6:00 P.M.

"October 22, back to Wetaskiwin. Services and meeting of the Sewing Society on the 23rd, 2:00 P.M. At 8:00 P.M., service and farewell address.

"October 24, back to Calgary, and service in the church at 8:00 P.M. October 27, services 10:30 A.M. and 8:00 P.M. October 29, service at 8:00 P.M. At 1:00 A.M. that night I left Alberta and went to Winnipeg. Arrived there Thursday, October 31 in the afternoon. Stayed there with Rev. J. A. Mattson until November 6 when I went home.

"The work in Alberta is too much for one man to care for. There is need of at least two good, faithful workers now, and more as the field develops. Immigration increases every year and many of our people are streaming in there from the old country and from the U. S. The spiritual conditions are not quite as bad as Vetell described them. On every field that I visited I found some who were serious minded Christians, tried and tested in the school of the cross. . . ."

At the close of the report he submitted his expense account: Total expenses for fare, lodging, and meals, $40.50; Collections at ten services and two baptisms, $23.50; balance $17.00. "I have nothing coming from the Conference. That much I want to do for the mission cause." [5]

Another Minnesota pastor, John A. Levine, was less favorably impressed on a tour of the same regions. On his way to Red Deer, Alberta, "it had pleased them not to meet us with any rig though they had promised to do so. After 'seven sorrows and eight difficulties' I got hold of a Baptist and got a ride in an old lumber wagon most of the way. When he did not want to drive any farther I took my satchel and used 'the apostles' horses,' arriving at 8:00 p.m. . . . The people are poor, making their living on cattle raising. The Baptists are active here, have misled and dunked several people, and next Sunday four preaching brethren are coming here again. It is too bad about our Swedish people who are lured up to these regions. It has rained all the time since I came up here. Last evening a severe snowstorm began and it has snowed all night so that the ground today (June 4) is covered with snow six inches deep. Today the people say that the land agents ought to be strung up by their big toes. But when the snow has melted they think this is the most wonderful country in America. . . . Another matter: What does the Executive Committee mean by not sending Vetell anything on his salary? . . . He lives in a little attic, a veritable shack, with a bed nailed together of rough boards. Unpleasant in every way." [6]

At the Conference convention in 1901 the executive committee reported that five calls had been issued in the attempt to get a pastor for Canada. All five calls had been declined. The Conference instructed the committee to continue in its efforts. In 1902 Rev. Per Almgren, a young and capable man, accepted a call and began his ministry at Wetaskiwin on May 1. In a letter to the Conference president a few months later he mentioned that he had 10 places to serve in Alberta. On his first visit to Calgary he found that the Lutheran Church had been taken over by a Presbyterian minister. The "intruder" was duly sent on his way. Almgren stated that the most promising field was east of Wetaskiwin, where Swedish settlements were found over an area 70 miles wide.

The Conference succeeded in getting three more pastors to Canada, Augustus G. Olsson to Winnipeg, Kristopher Rosenthal to Scandinavia, and N. Lehart to New Stockholm. Almgren was alone in Alberta, where the number of Swedes was estimated to be 10,000, of whom only 175 had joined the seven congregations organized by the Minnesota Conference. In this province seven Norwegian Lutheran pastors were working, and Almgren rejoiced that some of the Swedes had joined Norwegian congregations, for "we ought to be glad that others are gathering in the harvest, when we are not able to do it."[7]

When J. A. Krantz became president of the Conference in 1905 one of his first acts was to visit the mission field in Canada. He made two such missionary journeys, spending eight weeks in familiarizing himself with the situation. He was favorably impressed and urged the Conference to send more laborers to Canada.[8]

With thousands of Swedes moving to Canada, with a few capable and dedicated men as permanent pastors, with assistance by students and lay preachers, with occasional visits by the Conference leaders and by a number of pastors from Minnesota, it seemed as if the Canadian field was on the threshold of a great development. It was a severe blow to the work when the devoted and zealous young pastor Almgren was accidentally killed in February, 1906. After conducting a service in a settler's home one afternoon he and a companion were driving with horses and wagon where men were felling trees near the road. A tree struck Almgren and he died in a few moments. It was said of him that "all who have known him intimately are unanimous in their testimony that he was a true steward under God."[9]

He had rendered a remarkable service in Canada, serving seven congregations, and as many as 20 preaching places. He organized seven new congregations in less than four years. Soon after he came to Alberta in 1902 he wrote to the Conference authorities asking for a helper, and suggested Axel Eriksson, a son of Rev. E. M. Eriksson in Worthington. "He is a good, humble, young man, with exceptionally good ability as a speaker. . . . It is unusual to find a young man of his age so deeply interested in missions."[10]

The sending of Axel Eriksson to Canada became a most significant event in the Canadian mission work. He was 20 years old at the time. After Almgren's death, Eriksson devoted himself to farming for several years, but was again called to serve as lay preacher. In 1929 he was ordained and served as a pastor in Canada until his death in 1937. Two of his sons, Paul and Harold, are ordained pastors and a daughter, Helen, is a deaconess, all three serving the church in Canada. A nephew, Vincent Eriksson, is also a pastor in Canada.

After the sudden death of Pastor Almgren, his widow stayed in

Wetaskiwin and helped to carry on the work of the Sunday school and the women's work in the congregation, which was left vacant for two years before another pastor could be secured.

Krantz, the Conference president, in 1907 urged the establishment of the position of mission superintendent in Canada, and the Conference elected Rev. L. P. Bergstrom, Winthrop, to this position, offering a salary of $1,000, plus $200.00 for housing, and all expenses. He declined the call, but two years later a new call was extended, and he accepted, moving to Canada in July, 1909. Under his leadership the work was strengthened. During the first six months he travelled 12,093 miles by rail, more than 1,000 miles with horses, and many miles on foot, visiting the parishes and new missions from Edmonton to Port Arthur. Six pastors were serving in Canada, in addition to Bergstrom, in 1910.[11]

When the Minnesota Conference voted in 1912 to give the Red River Valley an opportunity to organize a new conference, a similar prospect was offered to Canada, although the Canadian parishes evidently had made no move in that direction. It is possible that Bergstrom had such plans in mind. In his report to the Minnesota Conference in 1912 he stated that "in accordance with resolution of the Conference" he had taken steps to get a school started in Canada. The Conference resolution adopted in 1911 did not name Bergstrom as the one to start a school, but "that the brethren on the Canada field be urged to take steps towards establishment of an educational institution." [12]

Bergstrom urged that an offer of free land for a school at Yorkton, Saskatchewan, be accepted. Krantz, in company with several of the Canadian pastors—J. G. Dahlberg, C. O. Olander, and P. A. Edquist—visited Yorkton in the fall of 1911 and became convinced that it was not the right place for a Conference school. They urged instead that it be established at Winnipeg. The Conference, instead of adopting this recommendation, voted: "That the Conference urge pastors and congregations in Canada in the near future to organize a Conference, and that when this has taken place, the Conference promises to give the new conference mission support in the amount of $5,000.00 for the first year." [13]

A school was started in Percival, Saskatchewan in the fall of 1912, with student Edwin Olmon as teacher. He had served the Percival congregation from Christmas, 1910 to the spring of 1912. At a meeting of Canada pastors and laymen held in Percival in July, a school committee was elected. This committee called Olmon, and also Rev. Claes Thunberg, newly ordained pastor who had just arrived in Percival, to teach. The committee also made arrangements to have Miss Emma Vickberg teach music. The school, which was held in the parsonage where Thunberg lived, was opened on November 11, 1912 with eight students, later increasing to 19, and with 15 studying music. In the fall of 1913 Olmon enrolled in Augustana Theological Seminary. Another man was called to succeed him, but the school was discontinued the following year.

Thunberg, now retired and living in Olympia, Washington, has given this opinion about the school in Canada: "As I think of the Canada Conference school matter now, 45 years after it was decided, I feel that a better and wiser arrangement could have been made. There was only one man at the meetings in Percival and Stockholm qualified to be at the head of a Conference school, and that man was Pastor P. A. Edquist. He had a brilliant mind, a good and honest heart, and he could make use of both English and Swedish with ease. He was popular with everyone and well known in Saskatchewan. . . . He had a brother who taught at Gustavus Adolphus for many years. . . . A different building than a home should have been found for the school. . . . Lack of wise foresight, planning, adequate financial and moral support together with the changing leadership of the Conference probably could be given as reasons for the school's discontinuance." [14]

Krantz reported to the Minnesota Conference in 1913 that he had been in Percival, Saskatchewan, July 25-28, 1912, to attend a meeting at which nine Canadian pastors and nine laymen were present for consideration of the Conference resolution relative to the establishment of a Canada Conference. He stated that the general opinion was in favor of organizing a conference, except for the problem of mission funds. Krantz had assured them that the Minnesota Conference intended to continue its support, whereupon they voted to go ahead with conference organization. But, said Krantz, opposition has arisen from quarters where something else would have been expected. The Alberta District had sent in a petition asking for permission to remain in the Minnesota Conference. And L. P. Bergstrom, in his report as mission superintendent in Canada, quoted Dr. Krantz in his statement the previous year regarding the Red River Valley Conference: "It would no doubt be best if this matter would be postponed until certain regions are more developed and a more natural division can take place. Nothing will be lost hereby, but much will be gained." Bergstrom also stated that "an accusation" had been made recently against the work in Canada, to this effect: "The Conference has over a period of 25 years continued as it now is doing and as you and the Alberta District so warmly recommend, but we stand still in the same place and get nowhere in anything we do." To defend himself and other workers in Canada he said that "in the past three years Alberta has been divided into parishes which call their own pastors and contribute about three-fourths of the support; Percival is self-supporting, so also New Stockholm; the number of congregations has doubled in three years, when the two have been organized which are now ready for it; the smallest one of the congregations that have been organized has 27 communicants, 53 members; the largest one 84 communicants and 124 members. Eight churches have been built or are under construction; sites for church and parsonage have been secured in 11 congregations; three parsonages have been built, and two more will soon be built."[15]

When the Conference considered the matters pertaining to Canada, a special committee recognized that Bergstrom had some basis for his comments, but that it was a matter of interpretation of the previous year's resolution, and that the Conference agreed that president Kantz had acted rightly at the meeting in Percival. In accordance with the recommendation of the special committee the Conference urged the Canadian pastors and congregations to proceed with the organization of a conference, promising $5,000 in mission aid for the first year, and to continue to grant aid in the future, and to plead the cause of Canada before the Synod. The mission superintendent was given a vote of thanks for his "extensive, exhausting, zealous, and fruitful labors."[16]

The organization of the Canada Conference took place in the mother church of the new conference, New Stockholm, Saskatchewan, on May 23-26, 1913. Six pastors and eight laymen were present (none from Alberta) and unanimously voted to organize, and the new conference was admitted to the Synod in June. Krantz had been succeeded in the office of president of the Minnesota Conference by P. A. Mattson of Cannon Falls. He was present at the organization meeting of the Canada Conference and served as the presiding officer. Rev. John G. Dahlberg, Winnipeg, was elected president.[17]

The Canada Conference had, at its organization, nine pastors, 39 congregations, 1,756 communicant members, 2,938 baptized members. There were 22 churches, eight parsonages, with a total value of $140,000.00.[18]

The formation of the Canada Conference left the Minnesota Conference with 282 congregations, 48,004 communicant members, 74,721 baptized members. There were 140 pastors in 1913.[19]

Until 1920 the Minnesota Conference appropriated $2,500 per year as aid to the Canada Conference. The appropriation was not always paid in full. In 1920 the Minnesota Conference resolved that it would no longer give direct aid to the Canada Conference, and that Canada be asked to seek aid from the Synod, since all the conferences contribute to the Synod's mission treasury.

It is evident from the official records that Krantz and Bergstrom had opposite views about the matter of organizing a conference in Canada in 1912. Whether it was a wise decision must ever remain an unsolved question. Claes Thunberg, who was there as a pastor at the time, has said: "The organization of the Conference was, I believe, like a 'shot in the arm,' especially in regard to the work in Saskatchewan . . . the people everywhere showed great interest in the church work. Everywhere people received me gladly. Many new members were gained. But like any drug that is injected into a human body wears off after awhile, so it seems when I look at the statistics, that the impetus from the Conference organization wore off in a few years: 1914, 2,938 baptized members; 1919, 3,674; 1925, 2,976; 1932, 3,075.

"When I look at the above statistics I can't help but wonder if the time for organizing was really ripe in 1913. Wouldn't the work in Canada have been better taken care of if it had been continued under the supervision of the Minnesota Conference or been transferred under the supervision of the Augustana Church?

"Considering Dr. Krantz and Dr. Mattson, who represented the

Minnesota Conference, and the pastor and delegates in Canada who favored the organizing on one hand and Pastor Bergstrom and those who were against organizing on the other, wasn't it possible that the latter group had the better perspective of the mission field in Canada? I am not saying that it was so . . . I am only wondering if it wasn't possible.

"On Page 8, Minutes [of the Canada Conference] for 1914, Pastor Dahlberg writes that the proposal to organize a Canada Conference did not come from anyone in Canada. If that was so, what was the motive for the proposal? Was it really made in true Christian love and concern for the work in Canada?"[20]

NOTES

[1] S. Udden to Honorable members of the Minnesota Conference Executive committee, August 24, 1888, Winnipeg, Manitoba, MS.; Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och Dess Förs. Hist.*, I, 91f.; Dahlberg, J. G., in *Förhandlingar, Canada-Konf. Första Årsmöte*, 1914, 4ff.

[2] Norelius, Eric, *De Sv. Luth. Förs. Historia*, II, 506; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Oct. 15-19, 1890.

[3] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1893, 1894, 1900.

[4] N. Ohslund to J. Fremling, April 4, 1900, MS.

[5] H. S. Chilgren to J. Fremling, Nov. 11, 1Y901, MS. Vetell had written to Fremling in July, "I am tired of this field. . . . In Alberta there are scarcely ten persons who are fully devoted to our work as it is now organized."

[6] John A. Levine to J. Fremling, June 4, 1901, MS. Levine had been called to serve two months on the mission field, the first month's service to be donated, for the second month he was to have $50.00 plus expenses. The arrangement was quite common in the Conference at the time.

[7] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1904, 32.

[8] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1906, 29ff.

[9] Broberg, Konrad K., in *Korsbaneret*, 1907, 216f.

[10] P. Almgren to J. Fremling, Sept. 5, 1902, MS.

[11] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1907, 28; 1909, 64; 1910, 40ff.

[12] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1911, 40; 1912, 51.

[13] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1912, 53.

[14] Thunberg, Claes, to Ferdy Baglo, Jan. 16, 1958. (Baglo is a student at Lutheran College and Seminary, Saskatoon. A copy of the letter has been seen by the author of this volume.)

[15] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1913, 31ff., 45ff.

[16] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1913, 104f.

[17] *Förhandlingar, Canada-Konf. Första Årsmöte*, Feb. 18-22, 1914.

[18] *Aug-Synod. Prot.* 1914, Statistical report. Three congregations in British Columbia, belonging to the Columbia Conference, were not and have not been transferred to the Canada Conference. Fort William and Port Arthur were included in the Canada Conference at its organization, but at their request in 1925 were transferred to the Minnesota Conference. In 1956 they were, again at their own request, transferred back to the Canada Conference.

[19] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1914, Statistical report.

[20] Thunberg, Claes, to Ferdy Baglo, Dec. 2, 1957.

Chapter IV

To The Black Hills

The home mission work of the Augustana Synod did not get off to a flying start, nor did it gain momentum very fast. At the organization of the Synod in 1860 it was not until late in the afternoon of the closing day of the convention that a resolution was introduced by Eric Norelius, calling for the election of a home mission committee, and authorizing the calling of a travelling missionary for Minnesota.

Norelius was called and served for one year, but of the stipulated salary of $400 he received only $325.18, and $100.00 of this had come as a gift from St. John's Lutheran Church, Philadelphia. The second year only $15.65 was contributed for home missions by the congregations of the Synod, and the third year $3.50. In the latter year, however, a gift of $421.00 came from a mission society in Sweden.[1]

A stronger effort was made in 1870 to organize the work. Regulations adopted that year provided for election of a Central Mission Board, to consist of four pastors and four laymen, besides the President of the Synod as an ex officio member. The duties of the Board were "to see to it that our widely scattered countrymen shall be provided with the preaching of the Word of God, that travelling missionaries, lay preachers or colporteurs be sent out; to determine their salaries and fields of labor; and to receive and account for contributions to home and foreign missions."

Each of the conferences should constitute a mission district, and each Conference president should be the representative of the Central Board, and he, together with two pastors and two laymen, elected by the conference, should be the mission board of the conference.

Although it was stipulated that the conference boards should report to the Central Board at least quarterly, there was an ambiguous resolution both as to division of responsibility, and regarding the use of mission funds. After stating that "mission contributions, to home as well as foreign missions, shall be sent to the Central Board," the resolution said, "However, each conference mission board shall have the right to use more or less of what is collected for home missions within its own area." [2]

In view of the shortage of pastors, and to provide at least a modicum of service for the many vacant congregations and the mission fields, each pastor was asked to spend one month each year in the service of missions. The following year the president reported that this resolution had been quite generally heeded, and had resulted in great blessings. The Minnesota Conference, it was stated in the report, had seen to that the resolution was properly obeyed within its boundaries. The Conference petitioned the Synod for the right to take complete charge of the home mission work in its area, and report directly to the Synod. This petition was granted, thus making the Minnesota Conference independent of the Central Board in the matter of calling traveling missionaries and other preachers, and setting their salaries.[3]

We have in the previous chapters traced briefly the story of how the Minnesota Conference expanded in a northwesterly direction, until two new conferences were formed, the Red River Valley in 1912 and the Canada Conference in 1913.

Montana also was visited by a Minnesota pastor. The practice of sending the pastors on a month's tour of the mission field, begun by the Synod in 1870, soon became a dead letter in Minnesota, but was revived in February 1882, at the suggestion of Rev. J. O. Cavallin of Moorhead. The Conference executive committee was directed to set up the schedule for the pastors' missionary journeys and publicize it in the Swedish newspapers. While a pastor was on his missionary tour the neighboring pastors in the district should conduct two services in his congregation or congregations.

One of the first to go was Eric Norelius, who went to North Dakota shortly after Easter, 1882. In Bismarck he met Peter and John Johnson, brothers and partners in business, who at the time were working as sub-contractors doing grading for the Northern Pacific Railroad, then under construction in eastern Montana. They had a crew of Swedish laborers on their project and Norelius went to visit their camp, which was somewhere in the vicinity of Miles City. He rode the train to the end of the track, then with horses to the camp. He stayed there a week, visiting with the men as he had opportunity, and holding services every evening. His pulpit consisted of an empty flour barrel with a buffalo hide thrown over it.

This was the first visit of a Lutheran pastor to Montana, but since his audience consisted of a crew of transient laborers no permanent organization could be effected. Not until 1895 was an Augustana congregation organized in Montana, and then the work was under the direction of the Synod's Board of Missions. Montana remained as a synodical mission district until it was included in the Columbia Conference in 1941.[4]

The visit of Norelius to Montana marked the western limit of missionary efforts by the Minnesota Conference in the United States. In the previous chapters we have mentioned the mission work in North Dakota, which later became incorporated into the Red River Valley Conference, and the work in Canada, which extended as far west and north as to Calgary and Edmonton.

In South Dakota the Conference today has its farthest south and farthest west work.

Before 1875 three congregations had been organized in South Dakota. Between 1875 and 1900, 26 congregations were organized. From 1900 to 1925, 13 were established. Since 1925 only one new congregation has been begun, and two have been reorganized. A total of 45 congregations have been organized, of which 20 are still in the Minnesota Conference.

Like Per Hansa in "Giants in the Earth,"[5] there was many a Swedish family that heard the prairie grass say "Tish-ah, tish-ah!" as the creaking wagon moved slowly westward "into the endless vista of the plain" which today is South Dakota. And no doubt many a mother felt as Beret did, that they were going to the end of the world. As Per Hansa with his oxen broke a few furrows, then cut the sod into lengths that he could handle, so they cut sod and built their first homestead huts. They plowed their fields and planted their potatoes, their corn, and their wheat. They had days when victory seemed near and sure. They had days and weeks when the rain did not come, when the locusts came in hordes that hid the sun, days and years when winter took its terrible toll, and even "giants in the earth" failed to come home through the Dakota blizzards.

Even earlier than the date stamped on Per Hansa's temporary deed—June 6, 1873—two Swedish Lutheran congregations had been organized in the southeastern corner of Dakota Territory, now Union and Clay counties, South Dakota. The first one—1870—was the Ahlsborg congregation near Elk Point, Union County; the second—1871—was Dalesburg (originally Dahlsborg) near Vermillion, Clay County.

The first Swedes came to these regions in 1867, some from Iowa, some directly from Sweden. The first Augustana missionary to visit them was Rev. J. Nessa, a Norwegian who served a congregation of Norwegian settlers at Brule, and also visited the Swedish people in the area. The Ahlsborg and Dahlsborg congregations were organized under the leadership of Rev. S. P. A. Lindahl, a travelling missionary stationed at Omaha, working under the direction of the Synod's mission committee.[6]

These congregations, and Union Creek in Union County, were included in the Minnesota Conference, but the Conference as such did not specifically assume responsibility for the missions in South Dakota until February 1876, when Rev. L. A. Hocanzon was directed to visit Dakota Territory before the next Conference meeting. Later the same year a student, J. A. Levine, was sent to serve Ahlsborg, Dahlsborg, and Union Creek. However, there are indications that some attention was being given by the Minnesota Conference as early as 1870, when the Conference mission committee mentioned among the regions where work should be done, "and also Dakota Territory, which we have not even explored as yet."[7]

In 1872 an unnamed writer (presumably Norelius) after listing the districts already organized in the Conference, said, "in time it will become necessary to organize . . . a sixth one in Dakota Territory."[8]

P. J. Eckman, a lay preacher (later ordained) visited the South Dakota congregations early in 1878 and reported that he found "a great hunger for the Word of God." Since these congregations were nearer to Iowa than to Minnesota, a pastor in Sioux City, C. G. Widen, was asked to give attention to them. However, the Minnesota Conference was trying to assume more of the responsibility. Four pastors, Peter Carlson, East Union, Andrew Jackson, West Union, John J. Frodeen, Center City, and H. P. Quist, St. James, were elected to go together on a journey to South Dakota. The pastors of the northern Iowa District were invited to share with them in this "mission meeting."[9]

Pastors Carlson, Jackson, and Quist made the trip to South Dakota in March, 1878. Widen from Sioux City was the only Iowa pastor who went with them. Their report, published a few weeks later, gives an interesting picture of the "old time mission meeting," which at least in some particulars was the pattern of district meetings throughout the Conference until well after the turn of the century. For this reason, and since it was the first such "mission meeting" in South Dakota, the report, written by Andrew Jackson, is given in full:

"Since the undersigned functioned as chairman during our mission journey to Dakota, it behooves me to give you a report about it. On Monday, March 11, we set out, arriving at Sioux City on Tuesday, where we were welcomed by Brother Widen, in whose home we enjoyed a few hours of rest and refreshment after an almost sleepless night on the railroad. We had expected to find there a few of the brethren from the Iowa Conference, but these hopes did not materialize, only Brother Widen accompanied us and participated with energy and warmth in our deliberations.

"After we had been provided with half-fare tickets we continued our journey on the Sioux City and Pembina Railroad [now a part of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific] in the caboose about 30 miles to Portlandville [Iowa], from there by horse and wagon to Union Creek, where we made a stop at Mr. Sellberg's small, pleasant home, and made the acquaintance of dear Lutheran Christians. It is refreshing and strengthening to one's faith to find individuals or whole families, whom the Lord has tested in the furnace of affliction and who in their suffering have learned to give heed to the sure prophetic word. So it was here, and such people we found also at the various places we visited. Their spiritual activity, though not so brilliant in the eyes of the world, nor so auspicious as that of some people who think they have gifts and the call to do great things, is nevertheless, in its humbleness, wholesome, edifying, unifying; they preach the gospel of the cross not only with words, but especially by their life and example.

"Now after my return home, as I look back on the experiences I had during the journey, with regard to the wonderful works of God, my heart is filled with thanks and praise to the dear Lord, who, even in the midst of stormy fanaticism and party strife, still keeps so many under the Lutheran Church's banner of the cross and faith. No matter how the fanatics cry aloud in every market-place, 'Here is Christ, here is Christ,' we shall not be misled as long as we, in our church keep the Word, which teaches what is sure and true, and the holy sacraments, which the Lord has instituted as the means for the giving of His grace.

"At 2:00 P.M. we met in the congregation's little church, at which time Pastor Quist preached the sermon. On the following day we first had a communion service, and then we continued with a discussion on 'The Means of Grace.' A Baptist minister, Norberg, was present and took part in the discussion, and also another one, who had first been a Lutheran, then a Baptist, and now was neither the one or the other, nor anything else. Although the discussion was altogether too short and had to be ended before the subject was even halfway exhausted, it served, as I hope, to real edification. The Lutheran Church's conception of the deep meaning and the rich significance of the means of grace was presented briefly. Baptism was the topic mainly considered, naturally as a result of the comments made from the Baptist viewpoint. Since their stand on the question of baptism, as over against the Lutheran viewpoint, is mainly a negative one, the total impression of our discussion was that he who forsakes our Lutheran, Scriptural conception of the meaning of the means of grace, gains nothing thereby, but rather loses, goes from riches to poverty, and stands to lose everything and to go, as the prodigal son did, out into a far country and there squander all that he had in the father's house.

"After the close of the discussion the new church was dedicated, and this closed the day's festivities. The congregation seemed very happy and thankful for the visit, which they showed also by giving an offering for missions, amounting to something over seven dollars.

"The next morning we were again in our 'chariot' and rode about 12 miles to Ahlsborg. We met first in the church; but since it was not finished (only 'enclosed'), and the weather was chilly, only the morning service was held there. In the afternoon, after a couple of hours' rest, we met in Mr. Albin's home. The topic for our discussion here was 'The distinguishing marks of the children of God.' Without giving a report of the discussion I would merely mention that these were given as the distinguishing marks: a) That the children of God base their adoption on the atonement of Christ; b) that they have the spirit of adoption; c) that they are governed not by the flesh but by the Spirit; d) faith, hope, and love; e) they pray, thus expressing their longing for grace and for growth in grace; f) that they reckon their adoption from the baptismal covenant, and that their conversion, if they have forsaken the Lord, is a return to this covenant.

"The next day Pastor Carlson stayed to have a communion service, and the rest of us drove to Dahlsborg, the largest of the three congregations. On Friday and Saturday we had sermons and discussions on 'Justification by faith.' The following theses were set up for the occasion, to guide us in the discussions: 1. Justification is based on Christ's full obedience. 2. It consists of God's act of judgment and grace, whereby the forgiveness of our sins is given and the righteousness of Christ is imputed. 3. It takes place when we, despairing of our own salvation, flee to the Lord Christ, believing His promise, 'Whoever comes to me will not be cast out.' 4. It has no degrees, but it is a completed action, which continues as long as we remain in faith. 5. It can be lost, but on condition of repentance and faith can be regained. 6. It works love, or the righteous life, in us.

"Pastor Andreasen of the Norwegian-Danish Augustana Synod [now a part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church], who is stationed near the Dahsborg congregation, was present and took part in our discussion. It was a matter of mutual rejoicing that we could have this opportunity to become acquainted, and so much the more when it was revealed in the discussion that our views on the topic were in complete agreement.

"On Sunday, nine new members were received into the congregation, two children were confirmed, after which we had holy communion with full service. In the afternoon the new church was dedicated to be a house of the Lord, in which none other than the Lutheran doctrine shall be preached. A few shook their heads, when this was set forth in the dedication address, but I hope that the congregation out there, under the pressure of all sorts of winds of doctrine, has learned to see that it is not right to open the Lord's house for all who happen to come and that any and every doctrine shall be preached there.

"Both in Ahlsborg and Dahlsborg, offerings were lifted for the mission work, amounting to $3.41 in the former and $11.14 in the latter. The Conference's share of the expenses of our journey were thus fully covered, and a little left over. On Monday morning we turned homeward again. We preached in Sioux City on Monday evening. In Worthington we divided up so that P. Carlson and H. Quist drove to Beaver Valley [Valley Springs, S. D.] and the places around there; the undersigned stayed in Worthington two days, had service and communion. The little congregation in Worthington has suffered considerably from proselyting by the Baptists, but it still lives and expects to grow as a result of the immigration which now flows westward in full force. But now I must close my letter, which has become longer than I intended."[10]

At Beaver Valley Carlson and Quist met P. J. Eckman, who as lay preacher had been serving since January 1 as travelling missionary in Dakota. He had found a settlement of some 16 families about 15 miles west of Beaver Valley. At this place—Benton Township, near Crooks—a congregation was organized in May, 1878, under the leadership of Rev. J. G. Lagerstrom of St. Peter.[11]

S. A. Lindholm came as pastor of the Ahlsborg-Dahlsborg-Union Creek parish following his ordination in 1878. He stayed less than a year. John H. Randahl, following his ordination in 1879, came to the Beaver Valley-Benton parish, and except for a few short intervals, he served in South Dakota until 1891. During his period of service as pastor and travelling missionary he organized the following congregations: Salem, June 1, 1882; Augustana, Sioux Falls, December 28, 1882; Nathanael, Alcester, May 16, 1885; Clara, Erwin, July 24, 1886; Zion, Carthage, December 19, 1886. In addition he had made visits and prepared for the establishment of congregations at New Home, near Mitchell, 1883, and at Fridhem in Charles Mix County.[12]

Pastor Anders Sundberg gave 20 years of service as pastor in South Dakota, in four different parishes: Ahlsborg-Union Creek, 1885-1886; Beaver Valley, 1886-1894; Salem, 1897-1904; and Mitchell, 1904-07.

Several other pastors visited South Dakota in the eighties, and some were stationed there for short periods.

One of the veteran home missionaries of the Conference, L. A. Hocanzon, made a memorable visit to South Dakota in 1884. After a tour of the places where congregations had already been established in the eastern part of South Dakota, he went on to Pierre, where he organized a congregation, and from there by stage 202 miles across Sioux country to Deadwood in the Black Hills, where gold had been discovered a few years earlier. On October 21 he preached in Lead, the first time that any Swedish Lutheran minister had conducted services there. In his report to the Conference he stated that he found the Swedes most often among the crowds at the gambling tables in the saloons. He also held services in Rapid City on October 28. Fifteen years elapsed before the Minnesota Conference succeeded in getting a resident pastor stationed in Lead.[13]

Because of the difficulty of securing permanent pastors for the Dakota congregations, the Conference tried to give at least intermittent service with the help of travelling missionaries. H. P. Quist was one of the indefatigable prairie pastors of the eighties and the nineties, as may be gathered from the report given in 1896, describing his itinerary:

"Thursday, August 13 to Clara, Erwin; Friday, 14th, and Saturday, 15th, meet with confirmation class; Sunday, 16th, Confirmation and communion; Monday, 17th, go to Carthage, preach at 3:30 P.M.; 18th, go to Pierre at night; 19th, preach in the country at 2:00 P.M.; in town, 8:00 P.M.; 20th leave at 2:30 A.M. for Huron, meet with confirmation class in the evening; 21st and 22nd, meet with class; Sunday, 23rd, Confirmation and communion; 24th, to Redfield, preach in the evening; 25th, to Doland, preach at 3:00 P.M.; 26th, preach at Ashton, 3:00 P.M.; 27th, to Armour, preach at 3:00 P.M.; 28th, to Boomington, 20 miles by horse and wagon; Sunday, 30th, preach in Platte Valley, 10 A.M.; travel 12 miles, preach in Fridhem 3:30 P.M.; Tuesday, September 1st, 28 miles by horse and wagon to Bijou Hills; 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, meet with confirmands; Sunday, 6th Confirmation and communion; 7th, to New Home, preach 2:30 P.M.; preach in town in the evening; 8th, preach in Salem 4:00 P.M., and have special congregational meeting; 9th, preach in Kila 3:00 P.M.; 10th, go home via Pipestone."

The itinerary called for three confirmation services and communion services in three separate places; 13 other church services; nine days' sessions with three different confirmation classes; one special congregational meeting; and approximately 850 miles of travel, with stops in 11 counties, all in the space of four weeks.[14]

Before 1900 a total of 29 congregations had been organized in South Dakota, in 18 counties: Roberts, 4; Union, 3; Minnehaha, 3; Davison, 2; Charles Mix, 2; Grant, 2; Hughes, 2; and one in each of the following: Brown, Clay, McCook, Kingsbury, Miner, Lawrence, Moody, Brule, Potter, Marshall, and Lawrence.

Roberts County forms the northeastern corner of South Dakota. A congregation was organized at White Rock in this county by J. O. Cavallin in 1887. Cavallin was then living in Moorhead, Minnesota.

When South Dakota was admitted to the Union in 1889 the greater part of Roberts County, and portions of other counties were included in the Sisseton Indian Reservation, also called the Lake Traverse Reservation. During the Sioux outbreak of 1862 the Sisseton Indians had been (generally speaking) loyal to the white people and in recognition of this fact the government, in 1867, gave them an area of more than 900,000 acres bordering on Lake Traverse. But as the frontier of civilization pressed ever farther westward the government made an agreement with the Indians to open some of this Reserve for white settlers. The Indian population on the Reserve in 1892 was 1,831. Each Indian was allotted 160 acres, and lands were reserved also for schools and religious organizations. Approximately 600,000 acres of land were opened for homestead entry. The opening occurred at noon on April 15, 1892. There was a tremendous rush for these comparatively choice lands.

Two methods of obtaining preliminary title were permitted. An entry could be made at the Land Office, which was then located at Watertown, or actual settlement could be made by reaching the land and making some improvement as an evidence of settlement. At Watertown a line of applicants formed outside the land office as early as April 13, while every town near the Reservation was filled with would-be settlers waiting the opening hour when the soldier guard would allow them to cross the line. In a few days more than 1,500 claims were filed.[15]

Among those who waited for the shotgun blast at noon on April 15, 1892, signalling the opening of the reservation, there were many Scandinavian settlers from Minnesota and other states. Before evening of that day many a hopeful homesteader had made "improvements" by cutting a strip of prairie sod on the quarter section he had chosen, to indicate the beginning of a cellar, a house to be built, and thus establishing ownership.

Several Swedish settlements were established in the vicinity of Rosholt and New Effington. The first Swedish Lutheran pastors to visit them were J. O. Cavallin and E. Schold, who came in 1893. Two congregations, Walla, New Effington, and St. Joseph, Rosholt, were organized in 1894 under Cavallin's leadership. Bethany, New Effington, was organized in 1897 by Rev. L. J. Lundquist, Graceville, Minnesota.

A decade later there came to this parish a young pastor who was endowed not only with zeal for the spiritual welfare of his people, but also with literary abilities. He was K. G. William Dahl, most widely known as the founder of the Bethphage Mission, Axtell, Nebraska. As a young student he served in Roberts county, South Dakota, the summers of 1905 and 1906 and also one Christmas vacation. After his ordination in 1907 he was pastor of the parish for two years.

Some of Dahl's experiences in this parish, as well as pioneer stories of an earlier day, were woven into a series of sketches and published in Swedish in 1913 under the title "Hedens Barn."[16]

Though Dahl makes no reference to places and times, and only one or two characters have been given names, it is possible to localize many of the scenes that he describes, and some of the events can be accurately dated. But this was not Dahl's plan in his book. In the persons and the events of his little community he saw the universal struggle of human life, the weakness and the strength of men, the selfishness of the unscrupulous, the power of mother love, the close tie between the people and the prairie, between the farmer and his faithful gray horses, the terrific battle of man against the elements. If Dahl had chosen a literary career he might have been a Rolvaag or an Ostenso—with a more tender spirit. One can hardly fail to notice an interesting parallel between Rolvaag and Dahl. Both describe pioneer life in South Dakota. Rolvaag's "Giants in the Earth" was written in Norwegian and published first in Norway. Dahl's "Hedens Barn" was written in Swedish and published in Sweden.

Dahl's little book, which had its roots in pioneer life in mid-America, might well be brought into the language of this land to aid us in our understanding and appreciation of the saga of the frontier. Here is the sickening story of how the white men deceived the red, who were as babes in business dealing—and here is the story of the red man's revenge. Here is the story of the bridge that stopped the sheriff on his unjust errand, for the bridge marked a state line. And the story of a lonely grave under the prairie sunflowers, with a marker that reads "He wanted to help Dad," and the story of "Black Karin," who succeeded in living down that nickname. And the reveries that flooded a sensitive soul at the sight of a little blue gentian by the roadside on the wild prairie.[17]

The longest period of service given by any one of the pastors in South Dakota in the 20th century was that of C. E. Cesander, who served in the Sioux Falls-Benton parish from 1909 to 1915, then in the Erwin-Orient field 1916-1921, after which he was elected "field secretary" for the Conference and served as a sort of "pastor at large" for vacant congregations in the Dakotas until 1927. He organized the congregation at Orient, and the one at Amor, North Dakota.

But, though dedicated and devoted men, such as those we have named, and others who could match them both in faith and perseverance, served the South Dakota field, it must be said that the home mission work of the Minnesota Conference made rather slow progress in South Dakota. In 1900 the total baptized membership of the 29 congregations was 2,542. By 1925 the figure had increased to 4,633. The latest statistics available at this writing (1957) show that the Conference has 21 congregations in South Dakota, with 6,177 baptized members, 4,365 communicants. These congregations are in 14 counties, all east of the Missouri River. The Augustana Church in Lead disappeared from the records in 1940, and the congregations at Hayes and Lantry in 1950, after several years of inactive status.[18]

The Swedish settlers were not attracted to South Dakota in great numbers. The Norwegians have far outnumbered the Swedes in that state, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church (predominantly of Norwegian origin) today has more than 80,000 members in South Dakota.[19]

The first congregations of the Minnesota Conference in South Dakota belonged to the Minnesota Valley District until 1886, when the "Southeastern Dakota District" was organized at a mission meeting in the Beaver Valley Church. J. H. Randahl was the first president. Other pastors present were his brother, A. H. Randahl, and A. Sundberg. The name was changed to "Sioux Falls District" in 1911.[20]

The Southeastern Dakota District originally included the following congregations: Ahlsborg, Dahlsborg, Union Creek, Beaver Valley, Benton, Salem, Sioux Falls, Flandreau, New Home at Mitchell, Nathanael at Alcester, Bijou Hills, Elfsborg, and Clara Lake at Preston. Later additions to this district were: Fridhem in Charles Mix County, Carthage, Pierre, Platte Valley, Black Hawk, Lead, Armour, Bethel in Lawrence County, Bethlehem at Mitchell, Beresford, Huron, Terraville, Orient, Redfield, Immanuel in Harding County, Newell, Lantry, Hayes and, most recently (1954), St. Mark's in Sioux Falls, all in South Dakota, and a few in North Dakota: Gascoyne, Haley, Hettinger, and Amor.

The four last mentioned have been dissolved or have vanished from the records, as have also Flandreau, Bijou Hills, Elfsborg, Fridhem, Pierre, Black Hawk, Lead, Armour, Bethel, Beresford, Huron, Terraville, Redfield, Immanuel, Newell, Lantry, and Hayes. Clara Lake at Preston has become Clara, Erwin. In Carthage a merger took place in 1947, when a congregation of the E. L. C. united with the Zion (Augustana) congregation to form Trinity. The congregations in Pierre and Huron, started in the early years of the 20th century as all-English congregations, were soon lost because of neglect.[21]

The Big Stone District of the Minnesota Conference was organized in 1888, and was made to include the following congregations in South Dakota: Langford, Groton (Claremont), Milbank, and Strandburg. Later additions were: White Rock, Rosholt, New Effington, Bethany in Roberts County, Webster, Bristol, LaBolt. For some years Strandburg and LaBolt belonged to the Winthrop District.

The South Dakota congregations, though generally small and located on the periphery of the Conference, have made more than the average contribution in at least one important respect. On the basis of averages one would expect that 14 Augustana pastors would have come from South Dakota, but actually there have been 24. One of them, Dr. H. Conrad Hoyer, is at present serving as executive secretary of the Division of American Missions of the National Lutheran Council. His grandfather was one of the pioneer settlers in Clay County in 1869, and a charter member of the Dahlsborg congregation.

NOTES

[1] *Aug. Synod. Protokoll,* 1860, 12; 1861, 18f.; 1862, 14.

[2] *Aug.-Synod. Prot.* 1870, 37f.

[3] *Aug.-Synod. Prot.* 1871, 8f., 30. The Conference also petitioned the Synod to consider the question of letting Minnesota become a separate synod, but this was denied.

[4] Johnson, Emeroy, "The Beginnings of Swedish Lutheran Church Work in Montana" in *Augustana Quarterly* XVII, No. 3, July, 1938.

[5] By O. E. Rolvaag, published by Harpers.

[6] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. Historia,* II, 993ff; *Minnes-Album öfver Sv. Ev. Luth. Förs. inom Sioux Falls Distriktet,* 28ff.

[7] *Minn.-Konf. Prot.,* Dec. 8-11, 1870, Minio ed. 32.

[8] *Luthersk Kyrko-Tidning,* Vol. I, No. 21, Nov. 1, 1872.

[9] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll,* Feb. 19-23, 1878. Mimeo ed. 159.

[10] *Ev. Luthersk Tidskrift* (Red Wing) I, 7, April, 1878.

[11] *Ev. Luthersk Tidskrift,* I, 10, May, 1878; *Minnesalbum öfver Sv. Ev. Luth. Sioux Falls Dist. Förs.,* 1917, 76.

[12] *op. cit.,* 28, 37f, 42, 52, 73, 77, 85, 94, 100, 102 ,108, 114.

[13] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll,* Feb. 12-18, 1884; *Minnes-Album öfver Sioux Falls Dist. Förs.,* 123f.

[14] H. P. Quist to E. Norelius, 1896, MS.

[15] *South Dakota Historical Collections,* XX, 164; Moris. H. S., *Historical Stories, Legends, and Traditions, Northeastern South Dakota; Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs,* 1892.

[16] Published by Förlags-Aktiebolaget; Malmö. The title may be translated "Children of the Heath" or "Children of the Prairie."

[17] The first of the sketches in Dahl's book was published under the title "The Gray Plugs" in *The Young People* (Rock Island, Ill.) Nov. 28 and Dec. 5, 1943.

[18] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* 1900, 1925, 1940, 1950, 1957.

[19] *Churches and Church Membership in the United States,* An Enumeration and Analysis by Counties, States and Regions, Bureau of Research and Survey, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. (New York) Series C, No. 26.

[20] *Minnes-Album öfver Sioux Falls. Dist. Förs.,* 22ff.

[21] *Minnes-Album öfver Sioux Falls Dist. Förs.,* 27.

Chapter V

The Arrowhead Region

It was Benjamin Franklin who, in 1783, negotiated the treaty that put the iron mines of Minnesota on the United States side of the boundary line, but he did not know the wealth that was hidden there. A hundred years went by before the first iron ore was shipped from northern Minnesota.

Occasional reports and rumors were heard that there was iron in that region, but not until 1865 was an official survey made, which stated definitely that iron had been found at Vermilion Lake. Further investigations were made by men interested in iron mining, and in 1882 the Minnesota Iron Company was organized. The town of Tower was laid out, named after Charlemagne Tower of Pennsylvania, one of the promoters of the new mining project. Swedish and Cornish miners from Michigan were brought to Tower. In 1884 the first iron ore was shipped from the Soudan mine at Tower to the lake port at Two Harbors. The iron-mining boom in Minnesota was under way.[1]

Among the first Swedes at Tower were H. Nordstrom, Olof and Erick Bystrom, W. Norden, Gust Sjostrom, Andrew Thompson, Chas. Johnson, and C. J. Sandberg. After 1886 a large number of others came. The first Lutheran pastor to visit the new community was a Norwegian, Rev. Grethjem of Duluth. The first Swedish service was held in 1885 at the Nordstrom home. Rev. C. J. Collin of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Duluth (then known as First Swedish Lutheran), came to Tower and Soudan in 1886 to investigate the religious needs of his countrymen. Through his endeavors a student, J. A. Broden, was stationed at Tower for a short time, and under his leadership a congregation was organized on December 31, 1886. Swedish people in the Soudan "location" as well as in Tower joined the congregation, and as soon as the question arose about a church site, there was a disagreement which resulted in a division of the congregation. The original "Bethel Lutheran Church of Tower" became the "Bethel Lutheran Church of Soudan," and a group of the Tower people organized a new congregation, in March 1887.

About 1,000 men worked at the Soudan mine. Tower had a large sawmill. The two towns were connected by a street car line. Prospects seemed to indicate a tremendous growth in both places, but this did not become a reality. Both remained small villages.

The congregation in Tower did not seek admittance into the Minnesota Conference, until a reorganization took place in 1893, under the leadership of Rev. G. Peterson of Soudan. It was then named the Immanuel Lutheran Church of Tower.

In the meantime a congregation had been organized in Two Harbors. Collin visited the Swedes in that city as early as 1885, but found slight encouragement for his hope of establishing a Swedish Lutheran church there "among rocks and stumps." Most of the Swedes were loggers and lumberjacks. However, he found C. N. Nelson, the owner of a sawmill, and "the most influential Scandinavian in the place" to be a hospitable and helpful man. "His home was always open, and his boardinghouse was the church."

With the opening of the railroad from Two Harbors to the Vermilion Range the town grew rapidly. Collin organized the Emanuel Lutheran congregation on November 22, 1889, and continued to give them more or less regular service until 1892, when the first resident pastor, G. Peterson, arrived. He was succeeded by N. Ohslund in 1894.[2]

In the early part of the 1890's a new and far greater body of ore was proved to exist, west of the Vermilion Range. After years of persistent searching the Merritt brothers (whose story has been told by Paul de Kruif in "Seven Iron Men") discovered the first of the fabulous treasure of the Mesabi Range. The first ore was shipped from Mountain Iron in 1891. The news spread rapidly, and soon thousands of people flocked to this new and greater bonanza, and among these were hundreds of Swedish families and unmarried young people.

L. A. Hocanzon, whom we have mentioned as a pioneer missionary in Canada, in the Red River Valley, in South Dakota, was now stationed in Cloquet. He made a journey to the Mesabi Range early in 1893, and reported to the Conference in May of that year, that "five or six towns have been built in the past few months. There are many Swedes, mostly young people, but as yet we have no place to hold services." The Conference granted him an assistant in his parish, so as to enable him to devote some time to missionary work on the Range. However, in the hectic days of new mines, new towns, new homes, the establishment of Swedish Lutheran church work was not easy. Virginia, the largest of the new towns, had one Swedish family, and they kept a saloon. There were many unmarried Swedes, but they could hardly be counted as residents, rather as transients. Nevertheless, a small congregation, consisting of 11 communicants and 23 children, was organized in December, 1894, and was named the Mamre Lutheran Church of Virginia (now First Lutheran Church). These charter members consisted of four married couples with children, and three unmarried women. Under Hocanzon's leadership this little group built a church in 1895, on a site donated by the Virginia Land Improvement Company. The Church was used for the first time on All Saints' Day, with Dr. Eric Norelius, Conference president, preaching the sermon. The congregation was served by students and temporary pastors until 1899, when P. O. Hanson took charge.[3]

Hanson's pastoral report to the Conference president in 1900 tells of missionary activity all over the Mesabi Range. In Virginia a parsonage had been built. Services were being held in the church regularly two Sundays each month, morning and evening. There were many Swedes in Virginia, but only 18 communicants and 36 children belonged to the congregation. Eveleth had about 100 Swedish families, and many young men living at boarding houses. The first service had been held in the town hall; no congregation had yet been organized, but a ladies' society was working for it, and a church had already been built at a cost of $950.00. Hanson was giving them one Sunday morning, one Sunday evening, and two Sunday afternoon services each month. Hibbing also had a ladies' society, but no congregation. Lots had been bought, and a church built, costing $1,200.00. John D. Rockefeller had donated $150.00 for the Hibbing church and $100 for the church in Eveleth. Hanson also had been visiting McKinley, Biwabik, Sparta, Mountain Iron, Shaw, Zim, and Ely. He reported 50 Swedish families in Ely. He said that "the Mesabi Range is not only the most important but the most difficult mission field. Drinking and godlessness are prevalent. Only a few are interested in the church." [4]

J. A. Krantz, who had succeeded Collin in First Swedish Lutheran Church in Duluth in 1894, had been quick to see the need of mission work on the Range and had done much to sustain this work until Hanson came as resident pastor. Krantz had come to Duluth as a 12-year-old boy, together with his parents, in 1869, when the city consisted of seven houses. He had grown up with the city and loved it. The north country had a fascination for him. Now as he saw the Range and the twin ports booming in an almost incredible manner he felt, perhaps more keenly than anyone else, the importance of establishing and strengthening the Lutheran Church in this region. He travelled and preached, sleeping, when necessary, behind the bar in a saloon during the few hours it was closed, 1:00 to 5:00 A.M. He pleaded with the Minnesota Conference for additional workers for the field:

"This district ought to have at least **one** mission pastor who could travel all over our widespread district to seek and gather our scattered people . . . [The Lake Superior District at that time included all the congregations in and around Duluth, Superior, the Range, east to Ashland, Wisconsin, west to Grand Rapids, and south to Sturgeon Lake.] Brother Nelsenius ought to have one helper . . . [in northern Wisconsin]. One is needed in Grand Rapids and the surrounding region. Another one should be in Sandstone to work along the Eastern Minnesota Line [now Great Northern] from there to West Superior. Brother Truedsson's field [Atkinson, Mahtowa, and the Sturgeon Lake area] is too large and should be divided. Another man must be called to the Mesabi field to share the work with Hanson. And toward the east we have the two whole counties where we have not been able to go, and where not a few Swedes are living." [5]

Interest in church work on the Range was increasing at this time, according to Hanson. In the report quoted above Krantz stated that Hanson was visiting Virginia, Hibbing, Eveleth Biwabik, Sparta, Zim, Mountain Iron, Ely, and Grand Rapids, and "where we could gather five or six a couple of years ago, we now have a hundred."

The list of congregations grew longer, as Eveleth and Hibbing were formally organized in 1900; Grand Rapids, Buhl, and Alborn in 1901; Ely in 1902; Chisholm and Warba in 1905. But reinforcements for the ministerial ranks were slow in coming. The Duluth district had 11 pastors in 1900, the same number in 1905, while the congregations had increased in number from 28 to 34, in addition to several mission places not yet organized. Hibbing, Eveleth, and Buhl were organized by P. O. Hanson of Virginia. (Buhl was not received into the Conference until 1917, but was considered a part of the Hibbing parish.) Chisholm was organized by J. Truedson of Hibbing. Ely was organized in 1902, but soon dissolved and reorganized in 1906, with J. D. Nelsenius as chairman of the meeting. Grand Rapids was organized by C. O. Swenson of Cloquet, Alborn by A. F. Elmquist of Duluth.[6]

Cloquet had become an important sawmill town in the eighties, and a considerable number of Swedish families were among the early settlers. Rev. Collin of Duluth visited them and under his guidance a congregation was organized in 1886 with 36 charter members. The first resident pastor was J. B. Bennett, who was succeeded in 1889 by J. S. Ryding. His term of service was only three years but in that period he carried on extensive mission work in Carlton, St. Louis, and Aitkin counties, winning a reputation as one of the busiest men in the district. During the pastorate of F. Edward Olson, 1915-1919, the church, built in 1888, and moved to a new location in 1900, was enlarged and remodelled. Dedication was set for October 13, 1918. On the 12th occurred the disastrous forest fire which wiped out Cloquet and several other towns in Carlton County. No lives were lost among the members of Zion congregation, but practically all had lost their homes and all their belongings. Nearly all moved back to rebuild their homes, and a new church was built in 1923, during the pastorate of N. J. W. Nelson.[7]

In the constant struggle to supervise the vacant congregations and new missions, the purpose and the significance of the district "mission meetings" are exemplified in narratives such as the following report of the Lake Superior District for the year 1896:

"The Lake Superior District has had six meetings during the past year, and these have been held in 24 congregations. No meeting except one has lasted less than three days, some four days. Counting the time required for travel to and from meetings some of the brethren have used four or five days for each meeting. Nevertheless all the pastors have been present at every meeting. Peace and concord have been in evidence. The Word of God has been preached and discussed, seemingly with great blessings for our congregations. Because of the size of our district, some 193 miles in two different directions, it has been impossible to visit all the congregations; therefore a suggestion is being made that we may get rid of Aitkin County.

"The district has received an addition of three pastors but we still have 13 vacant congregations and many mission places in the district. Yes, one can say that the whole district is one great mission field. The vacant congregations and the mission fields have been cared for as best we could. But it is obvious that a congregation suffers when the pastor has to use one-third or one-fourth of his time on the mission field. In one congregation there was quite a discussion at the annual meeting about reducing the pastor's salary because he devoted one-fourth of his time to the mission field, and that without any pay. What shall we do if it keeps on in that direction?"

The same report gives a picture of the economic situation in the district, a result of the severe depression that affected the whole nation in the nineties:

"The hard times have had a marked effect on our church work. As far as I have been able to ascertain, not one pastor has received his salary in full, and some of them only about half. I have not found that it was because of dissatisfaction with the pastors, but a sheer impossibility on the part of the congregations to fulfill their promises. Our people are so utterly penniless that they lack bread. In spite of all these hardships and these bread problems, I can still say that all the brethren have labored faithfully and diligently in their respective places."[8]

The writer of the report just quoted was J. D. Nelsenius, pastor in Ashland and missionary in several counties of northwestern Wisconsin. He gave 16 years of service to this field, 1886-1902, after which he served 14 years in Two Harbors. His term of service in Wisconsin was unequalled by any pioneer of the Minnesota Conference in that region, not only in length but also in the variety and uniqueness of his experiences. In his reminiscences, written some years after he had resigned, he wrote:

"When I arrived on the field there were only three small congregations. The largest of these—Saron, Ashland—boasted a membership of 13 communicants and six children. There was no Sunday school in any of the congregations. Only in Ashland was there a church in which to worship. It was not finished when I arrived nor was it paid for. The congregation did not even have a deed to the lot on which it was built. In all the other places where I conducted services we had to meet in homes, schools, or halls. Often when we held a service in a hall upstairs there was a saloon downstairs where business was carried on as usual. When we left this field of labor there were 11 congregations, 11 church buildings, and three parsonages.

"Practically every Sunday I preached at least three times, and one to three times during the week. The first year I travelled 10,000 miles by railroad, 170 more by horse, ten miles by oxen, 400 miles by boat, 65 by handcar, and walked hundreds of miles between the congregations I served.

"Christmas morning, 1886, I had early matin service in Ashland, then I went by train to Mason where I planned to hold service at 10:30 A.M. I had given my good friend, Olson, notice of my plans in ample time and asked him to publicize my services to the best of his ability. This he failed to do and even left town making it impossible for me to contact him. So I had to find someone else and at last came to a home where the head of the family promised to go along to the proper authorities and ask for permission to use the schoolhouse for our Christmas services. Having been granted permission to use the school we went from home to home, inviting people to come for a two o'clock service. The last place we came to was a boardinghouse where about 40 lumberjacks were observing Christmas in their way, by drinking, playing cards, and swearing. My companion slipped away into another room and left me alone with the men. I introduced myself and invited them to come to our service. The reaction was instantaneous. The cards were slapped down much harder, some men began to whistle, others began to swear. One man came up to me and asked where and how I had secured my fur coat, and tried in every way to make me angry.

"We had our service, with an audience of ten men and one woman. Two of the men were so noisy that I had to stop several times and ask them to be quiet.

"In spite of this unfriendly reception I continued to visit Mason regularly. About a year after my first visit a Mr. and Mrs. Olson came to our home in Ashland. Olson was the man who had failed to announce my services at Mason. Now he wanted to see me, at the urging of his wife, because his conscience gave him no peace. He found the blessed assurance of forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ. Eventually he moved to one of our congregations in the southern part of our state where for years he was a valued and faithful member.

"About a year later I was asked to visit a very sick man at Mason. He happened to be the owner of the boarding house where I had been so harshly treated on my first visit. A little earlier I had officiated at the funeral of one of the men who was present when I invited them to services. The sick man who now had asked me to see him had been present at the funeral, and now he was very much concerned about his relationship to God. Finally by God's grace he was able to believe that his sins were forgiven. Before very long he passed away. I was requested to officiate at the funeral. The sawmill at Mason was closed for the occasion, and large numbers of people attended the funeral, which was held in the very room where I had been cursed and ridiculed because I invited people to a Christmas service. The same people who on the former occasion bluntly told me they did not care for God, church, or preachers, were at least silent this time. But from this day and as long as I remained in Ashland I was always welcome in Mason and not least at the boarding house. The services, which were afterwards usually held on the second floor of the schoolhouse, were well attended.

"My first visit to Washburn was rather interesting. Soon after my arrival on the field I wrote to a man in Washburn asking him to make arrangements for a service. By telegram I received this reply: 'It is no use to come; people are not interested.' I mention this merely to show the attitude of many of the people toward the church and its servants. We became very good friends eventually and he with his family joined our church when it was organized, and his child was the first child I baptized in Washburn. I also had the joy of confirming this child before leaving Ashland.

"I was, of course, not to be kept out of Washburn by a discouraging telegram or anything else for that matter, so on December 20, 1886 I managed to get to Washburn. It was a very cold day and much snow had fallen. I spent my first night in a boarding house, in which a saloon was apparently doing a thriving business. Having secured a place to stay, my next job was to arrange for a service in the evening. So I had to find a place where I could conduct services, secure some lamps, make fire, and go from house to house inviting people to come. Most of the Swedes in Washburn came to the service, and also some of the Norwegians. On February 7, 1887 a congregation was organized, Emanuel Lutheran Church of Washburn.

"One Sunday, on my way to Washburn, I was nearly drowned in Lake Superior. On that particular Sunday I had held services in Ashland in the morning and was scheduled to be in Washburn at three in the afternoon. The only way I could get to Washburn at that time was by boat. I got to the dock in ample time but the boat that plied between Ashland and Washburn had been chartered that day by a group for a pleasure trip among the Apostle Islands.

"I happened to see a couple of boys with a small sailboat. I offered to pay them $2.00 if they could take me to Washburn. They agreed cheerfully and we were on our way in no time. But when we were halfway one of the sudden squalls that are characteristic of Lake Superior broke over us. Whitecaps began to roll and soon the boat was filling. I started to bail water and the boys tore down the sail in a hurry and rowed with all their strength toward the nearest point of land, which was about three miles from Washburn. We were all soaking wet and the water was almost ice cold. I had to walk three miles to the church, and without changing my clothes I conducted the service, and returned to Ashland, where I arrived about seven in the evening.

"I had heard that a number of our people had settled in Ironwood and Bessemer, Michigan, so I decided to investigate. On arriving there December 7 and 8, 1886 I learned that many Swedes and Finland Swedes were living in this region. No Lutheran work had been done there, so I started by conducting services in a little home consisting of two rooms, one built of logs and the other of unfinished boards placed vertically. In the room where I slept it was so cold that when I awoke in the morning the bed clothes were frozen to the wall. My next visit to these places was made January 3, 1887. Our work made progress. A few more services were held and on February 20, 1887 the Salem Lutheran Church of Ironwood was organized.

"My regular visits to the various congregations and preaching stations were well known to almost every one along the line, and in order to avoid confusion I had to make these trips with clock-like regularity. Once when I passed through Spooner I was asked to officiate at a funeral while the train stopped for dinner for the crew. A family had lost a 12-year-old daughter. They knew I would be passing through on the train, and they had made all necessary preparations for the funeral. I had to hurry as fast as I could, for the train stayed there only 20 minutes.

"Birch Lake is located about 20 miles from Ashland. At that time it was surrounded by an almost impenetrable forest. Those who first settled in this primitive place had to carry their groceries and other necessities on their backs from Ashland. At the time I made my first visit, July 2, 1889, a rough and often impassable road had been opened through the woods. This road extended only about 12 miles in a southwesterly direction from Ashland. I secured an old horse and a dilapidated wagon and set out for Birch Lake. The first three miles were not too bad and I made fairly good time, but after that I had to make my way over discarded logs, old stumps, and windfalls. Several times I had to unhitch the horse and pull the wagon over the worst places myself, then lead the horse across and hitch him to the wagon. Marshes and stump holes were filled with water from the recent heavy rains. About noon I had come as far as to the Marengo River where the road came to an abrupt end. There I had to leave the wagon. From there I had three miles to the home of the Sandquist family where I was scheduled to conduct services. When I finally arrived I found six families and a single young man waiting for me. I was wet, tired, and hungry, but had to baptize three children, and then preach a sermon. My text was John 10. 10-15. This was the first service in this part of Bayfield County conducted by an evangelical clergyman in any language.

"The following day a funeral was held at which I was to officiate. A child had died in the Sandquist family the day before I arrived. It was decided that we would meet at five o'clock in the morning at the cemetery three miles from the home. The funeral had to be held that early because I had two appointments about four o'clock the same day three miles the other side of Ashland. We had a short devotion at the home about four o'clock in the morning and started for the cemetery without delay. The father of the child and a neighbor, carrying the casket, headed the procession, the mother followed them and I came last, leading the horse. We walked slowly along a trail through the heavy timber. Though it must have looked grotesque to someone watching us as we wended our way through the forest early in the morning, there was nevertheless a certain solemnity and reverence that no one could fail to notice. The sun shone through the tops of the majestic trees and the birds furnished free music as they greeted a new day. When we arrived at the cemetery we found practically everybody in the settlement present in spite of the early hour. About seven o'clock I started back to Ashland. That day I had nothing to eat from 3:30 in the morning until seven o'clock in the evening.

"I continued to visit Birch Lake quite regularly. In 1897 the Trinity Lutheran Church was organized, and a little later a church was built.

"On July 23, 1893 I made my first visit to the recently established community of Port Wing, located on the shore of Lake Superior. The founder was T. N. Okerstrom. I went by train early in the morning from Ashland to Iron River and from there we were to travel by horse the 18 or 20 miles to Port Wing. For four or five miles we did not encounter any serious trouble since we were able to squeeze our way between the shrub oaks that grew everywhere, but the rest of the way was almost impassable. Twice the wagon tipped over and once the wagon box slid on the horses. We finally arrived in Port Wing at sundown. The settlement consisted of three or four houses. I was welcomed to Port Wing by its leading citizen, Mr. Okerstrom, and his good wife. In their home a service was held that evening. The text was Philippians 2. 12 and my theme, 'Our Salvation.' This was the first service conducted in any language by an evangelical clergyman in this part of Bayfield County. The following day services were held at the home of the Fred Larsons who lived in the woods some distance from Port Wing. At this service the first two children in this region were received into the church through holy baptism. In this way our work was started at Port Wing. A congregation was organized there in 1895.

"When we were building the church in Ashland I decided to go one day to a camp near Moqua and solicit money. I got no money but instead a rather severe beating. I finally got away and in order to escape further punishment I left the camp for another one about two miles away. The night was dark and the snow was deep, so I was very tired when I arrived. Here I was given shelter and a bed. The next morning I was looking for some way to get back to Ashland. I was informed that a logging train was to leave shortly for my destination. I was promised a ride home if I would ride in the cab of the engine, since they had no caboose. The train was made up of a long string of cars loaded with logs for the mills. Going down a grade, we discovered that the brakes did not work on account of the cold weather. We had a runaway train on our hands. In order to escape what seemed certain death, we all jumped, and soon afterwards the train left the track a total wreck. We were not hurt. Just a few bruises and cuts, that was all. This happened in February, 1892."[9]

The missionary journeys of J. D. Nelsenius in Wisconsin took him also to Cumberland, where Swedes had settled as early as 1878, and where a congregation had been organized in 1885; Rice Lake, where Nelsenius appointed a student to organize a congregation in 1886; Shell Lake, where Nelsenius himself presided at the organization of a congregation in 1888; Clayton, Beloit, Bibon, Iron River, Richardson, and other places.[10]

At times he had as many as 20 preaching places and he was instrumental in laying the foundation for establishment of at least 12 congregations. Most of these are in the present Lake Superior District, some in the Apple River District, and two are in the Superior Conference.

A Swedish Lutheran congregation had been organized in Superior in 1871. In 1888 a new congregation, the Pilgrim Lutheran Church, was begun, under the leadership of C. J. Collin of Duluth, and a few years later the former congregation was dissolved.

A. P. Monten became pastor of the Pilgrim congregation in August, 1888, and remained there until 1898. The congregation grew in this decade to 231 baptized members, and under Monten's leadership seven new congregations were organized, three of them in Superior (Salem, Zion, and Bethlehem); Salem, Mahtowa, Minnesota; Bethel, Atkinson, Minnesota; Immanuel, Bennett, Wisconsin; and Bethany, Poplar, Wisconsin. These seven new congregations had a total of 483 members when Monten left Superior. He had promoted a colonization project for Swedish settlers in Carlton County.

The financial panic of 1893 hit the iron mining country a hard blow. Money was scarce in and around Superior, as seen by a report from Monten in 1896:

"Pilgrim has 160 communicant members and can raise $500.00. The congregation in Superior City has 17 communicants and can give about $40.00. Zion has between 20 and 30 communicants and can give $12.00 per month as long as it rents out the church to the public school. Salem has between 30 and 40 communicants and can give $100.00 for the year. Bethany, Poplar, has promised $40.00 for the year. The travel expense for one service per month will be $8.00 for the year. Immanuel, Bennett Siding, wants six services per year, at $3.00 for each service. Travel expense is $5.00 per year. Two men are needed here, and the Conference should pay all the salary for one." [11]

After Monten had left Superior for the comparative ease of a North Dakota parish, he wrote:

"I was bodily and spiritually tired out in the city. I could not sleep at night. The blood often rushed to my head so I became dizzy and had to throw up. The doctors predicted my early death if I did not get some rest. I did not miss one service or one pastoral act during the almost ten years I was in Superior. The hardest for me was to see all the misery in which most of the church members found themselves during the five years of hard times. No one can imagine what Superior went through after the boom, except those who experienced it. I never had any difficulty with the congregation, however." [12]

The Pilgrim congregation survived the financial anemia of the nineties, but for a dozen years there were frequent changes in pastoral leadership and slow growth until 1910, when A. Theodore Ekblad, a seasoned and successful minister and church fund solicitor, became the pastor. During his 26-year ministry the congregation doubled in size, and was strengthened financially. He was succeeded by Abner W. Arthur, who served as pastor of Pilgrim from 1937 to 1953. During this period the membership increased threefold and a new church was built. Pilgrim today is a congregation of more than 2,100 baptized members, with church property valued at $325,000, something far beyond the imagination of even the energetic and far-sighted A. P. Monten 60 years ago.

Of the other congregations organized in Superior only Zion remains now as a part of the Minnesota Conference. Salem dwindled in size and was dissolved in 1941. Bethlehem was transferred to the American Lutheran Church in 1948.[13]

Duluth was a straggling village at the head of Lake Superior until 1870 when railroads were completed between Duluth and Fargo and between Duluth and St. Paul. The boom which began then lasted a few years, but the depression of the seventies blighted early hopes, and in 1880 the city had only 3,000 people.

The First Swedish Lutheran congregation had dwindled to 57 communicants in 1882, when Carl J. Collin became the pastor of this parish and travelling missionary in several counties. In 1884 he served six different congregations and eight other preaching places. While devoting the major part of his time to Duluth and Superior, he also made occasional trips to the smaller Swedish settlements from Ely to Hinckley, and from Aitkin to Poplar, Wisconsin. During a 12-year ministry in this area he saw the beginnings of the iron mining industry in northern Minnesota, resulting in the growth of Duluth's population from 3,000 to 33,000 between 1880 and 1890.[14]

As mentioned above, J. D. Nelsenius came to Ashland in 1886, A. P. Monten to Superior in 1888. Collin was able to concentrate on the Minnesota regions. The field developed rapidly in and around Duluth. The First Swedish Lutheran congregation had built its church at Second Avenue West and Second Street. Many of the members lived two or three miles west of this, at a place then known as Rice's Point. To serve this new and growing community the congregation built a chapel in 1886 at the corner which now is 20th Avenue West and Third Street. Three years later 111 members of First Swedish Lutheran Church were given dismissal at one time to organize a new congregation, which was named Bethany. The chapel was given to the Bethany group and served as their church until a new one was built in 1905 at 23rd Avenue West and Third Street. Bethany was under Collin's leadership about a year. In 1890 Carl O. Cassel, an able man, newly ordained and "aglow with the Spirit," came as the first resident pastor. He died of pneumonia in 1898, but the results of his eight-year ministry were evident in that the congregation had grown to a membership of 350 communicants and a Sunday school of 319 children. The congregation continued to grow under the leadership of succeeding pastors: A. F. Elmquist, 1899-1905; C. G. Olson, 1906-1914; C. A. Eckstrom, 1914-1941; Evald Olsenius, 1941-1948; Philemon Smith, 1948—. The congregation now numbers over 1,200 baptized members.[15]

The city was rapidly spreading out along the hillsides overlooking the harbor. Two miles west of the Bethany chapel another strongly Swedish community was being established. Under the leadership of Collin and Cassel, work was begun there in 1890, with the result that the Elim congregation was organized that year. During the nineties the growth was slow, due probably in part to frequent changes of pastoral leadership. In 1902 J. A. Krantz came to Elim, after serving eight years in First Swedish Lutheran Church. He remained as pastor of the Elim congregation until 1914, and during the greater part of his ministry there he also served as president of the Minnesota Conference, a position to which he was elected each year from 1905 to 1912.

Rev. Christion Swenson, who had been Krantz's predecessor at Elim, 1900-1901, also became his successor, serving from 1916 to 1919. Carl H. Olson was called to Elim in 1920 and served until 1937. In 1926 a new church was built to replace the small frame structure erected in 1894.

Pastors who have served Elim since 1937 are: Reuben H. Ford, 1937-1944; George M. Gustafson, 1944-1952; Emil L. Swanson, 1952-1956; H. Milton Lundahl, 1957-—.

Elim congregation had attained to a figure of 800 baptized members during Olson's pastorate, and at the present time (1957) numbers over 1,000.[16]

As pastor of First Swedish Lutheran Church from 1894 to 1902, J. A. Krantz had led that congregation through a critical period. Lots for a new church site had been purchased at boom prices. After the value of the property had skidded to a fraction of its cost the congregation was saddled with a $14,000 mortgage. Many church members left, but the ones who remained loyal were knit more solidly together.[17]

Carl Solomonson succeeded Krantz as pastor of First Swedish Lutheran Church. Plans for a proposed new church were soon on display, the members of the congregation rallied under Solomonson's leadership, and a new church was built at Sixth Avenue East and Third Street. A new parsonage was built also.

The First Lutheran Church of Arnold, six miles northeast of downtown Duluth, was organized by Solomonson in 1904. Krantz had visited that area on some of his numerous missionary journeys. A church, built in 1905, was completely destroyed in the great forest fire that flared to the very edge of Duluth in 1918. The congregation worshipped in a basement structure until a new church was built in 1931, under the pastoral leadership of Oscar Olson. The congregation today numbers approximately 450 baptized members.[18]

During Solomonson's pastorate the church council of First Swedish Lutheran investigated the need of a branch Sunday school at Lakeside, on the east side of Duluth. Mr. Fred Peterson was appointed to have charge of it, and work was begun in an old town hall on 45th Avenue East on July 4, 1909. A few years later the Sunday School was moved to rented quarters in a Presbyterian Church. Occasional services were held, and this activity became the origin of the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, organized in 1943. The mother church then gave the "daughter" the Lakeside Chapel, which had been built in 1928. Good Shepherd started as a congregation of 197 communicants, drawn mainly from the other Augustana congregations in Duluth. It has more than tripled in membership in 15 years.[19]

Carl O. Swan succeeded Solomonson as pastor of First Swedish Lutheran congregation in 1912, and served there until 1935. Aside from steady growth in membership during this period, the congregation has had a major part in the establishment and development of the Christian Service institutions in Duluth, Bethany Lutheran Home for Children and Lakeshore Lutheran Home for the Aged. In 1933 the name of the congregation was changed to Gloria Dei.

The pastors who have served Gloria Dei since 1935 are: Wilton E. Bergstrand, 1935-1938; Paul H. A. Noren, 1938-1943; Arthur O. Arnold, 1943-1946; Carl L. Manfred, 1946-1953; Floyd E. Lauersen, 1953—.

The Bethel Lutheran Church in Duluth was organized by Finland Swedes. Swedish immigrants moved to Finland from prehistoric times and until 1809 when Sweden's political dominance over Finland came to an end. The Swedish element in Finland constitutes about ten per cent of the population. Of the immigrants from Finland to

America in the 19th century, many were of Swedish stock. They settled mainly in northern Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Duluth and the iron mining towns attracted several thousands of them. In Finland the distinction between Finns and Swedes was clear. In America the Finland Swedes were not readily absorbed into any Lutheran congregations, because immigrants from Sweden did not feel related to them but often classed them as Finns, though they spoke Swedish, and of course the Finnish immigrants had always considered the Swedes as different from themselves, which they indeed were.

In Duluth interest in the organizing of a Lutheran church for Finland Swedes was first manifested in 1896, and the following year a schoolmaster, Erik Johanson, from Jeppo, Finland, was asked to conduct services for his people in a church at 60th Avenue West and Bristol Street. A congregation was organized in November, 1897, and a small church building was bought. It stood at 59th and Elinor, but was later moved to 54th Avenue West, near Grand Avenue. Johanson was ordained and served the Bethel congregation until 1901. The congregation then sought to become affiliated with the Finns, but this overture was declined.

Krantz, while serving as pastor of Elim, was asked to take care of the struggling Bethel congregation. A reorganization took place in 1905 and Bethel became a part of the Minnesota Conference. Rev. Gustav Oberg served as pastor from 1908 to 1912, and again from 1915 to 1919. Rev. Carl J. Silfversten, himself a Finland Swede, was pastor of the congregation from 1920 until his retirement in 1946. Since then the congregation has been served by Alex E. Falk, 1946-1949; Arthur L. Anderson, 1949-1952; Verner T. Matson, 1952—. Silfversten was an authority on the history of the Finland Swedes, and published a volume, in Swedish, on this subject. His research indicates that they form a large percentage of the membership in several of the congregations on the Iron Range, notably Chisholm and Ely.[20]

The Holy Trinity congregation in Duluth was organized in 1912 as an all-English church. The organization meeting was held in the Bethany Church under the leadership of Rev. F. O. Hanson, the Augustana Synod's "English field secretary." A "West End Mission Society" had been in existence prior to this time, which also included a Ladies' Aid society and a Sunday School. These, and also the English department of the Bethany Sunday School, were united with the new congregation. Hanson served as temporary pastor a few months, and as the resident pastor, 1914 and 1915. There were frequent changes in pastoral leadership until 1922, when Rev. Ernest G. Svenson began a ministry of five years, during which time the present church was built at 27th Avenue West and Third Street, and the congregation increased to a membership of more than 500 communicants. Pastors who have served Holy Trinity since that time are Elmer Olsen, 1927-1932; Emmer Engberg, 1933-1936; Carl H. Sandgren, 1936-1940; Clarence T. Nelson, 1940-1947; Arthur T. Anderson, 1947-1954; Wayne Peterson, 1954—. During Nelson's pastorate (the World War II era) the communicant membership figure increased from 667 to 1048.[21]

Salem, organized in 1924; Highland, 1930; Emmanuel, 1941; and Concordia, 1942, are all within the city of Duluth; Immanuel, Proctor, and French River, both organized in 1924, are in the adjacent suburbs; and Bethelehem, Twig, organized in 1947, is a few miles from the city. The total baptized membership of the churches of the Duluth District in 1957 was 11,090.[22]

In spite of the mushroom growth of the cities on the Mesabi Range, the Swedish Lutheran churches grew rather slowly in membership. By 1920 the two largest, Virginia and Hibbing, each had surpassed the 200 mark in the number of communicants. By 1940 Virginia had reached the 400 mark, and Hibbing 500. At the present time (1957) Hibbing has 600 and Virginia 560. Rev. A. E. Bomgren has served First Lutheran, Hibbing, since 1934. Rev. N. Edward Vickberg was pastor of First Lutheran, Virginia, from 1941 until his death in 1957. He had aroused the admiration not only of the people of his congregation but of thousands in many states by his example of courage and faith, his cheerful spirit and quiet devotion. Three years before his death he was stricken by a form of Hodgkins disease, and had to submit to frequent blood transfusions. During his last year he had fifty transfusions. All this time he not only carried on his preaching and ordinary pastoral duties, but he led his congregation in the erecton of a new $250,000 church. A few months before his death a Virginia newspaper man, Grove Wills, wrote of him in the Mesabi Daily News: "While he has an indomitable spirit, Pastor Vickberg and his wife feel that his ability to carry on is a direct result of hundreds of prayers from persons of all denominations; that the evident results are a definite response to their supplications, and that the doctors and nurses are the very instruments of God in their cooperative endeavors in his behalf. All of this offers him the power to preach to his own congregation and to bring the message to all others that despondency should be dispelled from one's thoughts; that we should accept our fate from day to day; that we should be glad to receive what is given us and have faith in the dawn of a better tomorrow."[23]

As early as 1900 missionaries working on the Range were turning their thoughts to places a hundred miles farther north. P. O. Hanson wrote to the Conference president: "The Rainy Lake region should not be forgotten. It is said that there are many Swedes."

The Executive Committee of the Conference referred to the need of pastoral work in International Falls in 1904 and 1905, but no one was sent until 1908, when Nelsenius made a visit to the region, and Rev. H. O. Hemming of Roseau was stationed there for a time as the Conference missionary. He organized the First Lutheran Church of International Falls and the Bethany Lutheran Church of Loman in 1909. Rev. E. A. Lindgren became pastor of this parish in 1910, and was succeeded by P. O. Hanson in 1913. Hanson organized the Zion Lutheran Church of Fort Frances, Ontario, just across the Rainy River from International Falls, in 1919. To the northwest of Fort Frances four small congregations were organized in the thirties. They have all but disappeared.[24]

In 1925 the Canada Conference requested that the congregations in Fort William and Port Arthur, Ontario, be transferred to the Minnesota Conference, and they were then added to the Duluth District. In 1955 they were transferred back to the Canada Conference.[25]

Until 1887 the congregations of the Duluth area and northwestern Wisconsin belonged to the St. Paul District. Upon authorization of the Conference the district was then divided. The original Duluth District, organized at the Zion (Trade Lake) Church, near Frederic, Wisconsin, included the congregations in Minnesota from Cambridge to the Vermilion Range, and in Wisconsin from Frederic to Lake Superior a total of 20 congregations served by seven pastors. In 1891 the district was divided into the Lake Superior District (Duluth, the Iron Range, Carlton County, Superior and Ashland and adjacent territory in Wisconsin) and the St. Croix District to the south. In 1912 the Lake Superior District was divided into two districts, the Wisconsin-Minnesota state line forming the boundary between them. In 1918 the Duluth District was again divided, when the Carlton district was organized, with 20 congregations. In 1930 the Duluth District was divided once again, when the Iron Range District was established. The Iron Range District included 15 congregations and some mission places served by five pastors, and the Duluth District had 13 congregations, served by nine pastors. The Iron Range District has grown to include 20 congregations, served by 11 pastors (1957). The Carlton District has been dissolved (1957) and most of the congregations in that district included in the Duluth District.

An effort was made in the twenties to organize a new Conference in the northern part of the Minnesota Conference area, to comprise the Duluth, Lake Superior, Carlton, and Brainerd districts. When the Conference decided, in 1923, to unite the several charity institutions under the Board of Christian Service, the strongest opposition came from Carl O. Swan, pastor of First Swedish Lutheran Church, Duluth. He had served on the board of Bethany Children's Home since it was established in 1914. He and his congregation had given much time and effort to the institution, and Swan was convinced that it was not to the best interests of the home to include it under a general board that would supervise all the Christian Service institutions.

At the annual meeting of the Duluth District, held in Bethany Church January 22-23, 1924, the pastors and delegates discussed the question of splitting the Conference. Swan wrote a few days later to the president, P. A. Mattson, to assure him that the desire for division of the Conference was not to be interpreted as opposition to him, "for the brethren think and speak well of you."[26]

The Board of Christian Service was elected in 1923 and was authorized to proceed with all preliminary steps and be ready to function at the time of the 1924 Conference convention. Swan was elected to membership on the Board, and was chosen as one of the three to manage Bethany Home. Swan was bitterly opposed to letting Bethany Home be transferred to the new Board. In a letter shortly before the Conference meeting he wrote to Mattson: "Now our Board is coming in with a request for permission to continue operating Bethany Home independent of The Board of Christian Service. But I don't care much how it goes, for the fire that burned in me for this work has turned to embers and ashes. Our laymen too have been called down so much that it is impossible to get them to do anything. . . . I shall send in my resignation from the big board one of these days. . . . Then everything will go of itself when they get a few numbskulls who don't understand anything, to meet a couple of times a year down in St. Paul. But I know that Bethany Home will lose thousands of dollars every year. But the Conference will have to pay." [27]

A month later he wrote that a law firm had given their opinion that there was no legal way to transfer Bethany Home to The Board of Christian Service. "The whole new order is disorder and not of God. . . . Our charity work is in a state of chaos." [28]

The petition of the Bethany Home Board was duly laid before the Conference and was tabled. In due time the Home was transferred to The Board of Christian Service. Swan continued to serve on the Board until 1930.

However, agitation for division of the Minnesota Conference was continued. In 1925 the Duluth, Carlton, and Brainerd districts petitioned for permission to organize a separate conference, to include also the Lake Superior District, but the Lake Superior District and one congregation in the Duluth District presented their refusal to join in the founding of the proposed new conference. The Conference authorized the appointment of a committee to study the matter for a year, and the president selected for this task Dr. Carl J. Petri, Minneapolis; Rev. C. A. Eckstrom, Duluth; Rev. Arvid F. Hoorn, Superior; Mr. C. F. Anderson, Brainerd; and Mr. Albin F. Erickson, Ashland.[29]

The committee report, submitted to the Conference in 1926, recommended the formation of a new conference, to include the Duluth, Lake Superior, Carlton, and Brainerd districts. In spite of a plea by Mattson to make haste slowly, the Conference voted to recommend to the Synod that the new conference be established. It was stipulated that the two conferences should cooperate in support and control of the educational institutions, but Bethany Home for Children would be given to the northern conference. The Synod considered the matter in June of the same year. Since there was opposition of the part of the Lake Superior District and some congregations in the other districts involved, the Synod did not wish to take action but referred the whole matter back to the Minnesota Conference for further study. And there the matter rests. No further reference to it is found in the minutes of the Conference. But at the convention of 1927 the Conference made some gestures in the direction of calling a travelling missionary for the Duluth area and also establishment of an old people's home there.[30]

NOTES

[1] Blegen, Theodore C., *Building Minnesota*, 54, 272ff.
[2] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och dess Förs. Historia*, II, 1078f, 1087.
[3] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och dess Förs. Historia*, II, 1091f.
[4] P. O. Hanson to J. Fremling, pastoral report for Feb. 10, 1899 - Feb. 19, 1900. MS.
[5] J. A. Krantz to P. Sjöblom, Lake Superior District report to Conference President, Jan. 22, 1901, MS.
[6] *Minn.-Konf. Prot.*, 1900, 1905, statistical reports; Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och dess Förs. Hist.*, II, 1081; 1098-1104; 1139.
[7] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och dess Förs. Hist.*, II, 1116ff.; *Minutes of Duluth District*, 1892, MS., 491. In three years Ryding had baptized 159 children, confirmed 22, received 66 new members, married 26 couples, conducted 43 funerals, had delivered 625 sermons, made 300 sick calls, held 100 prayer meetings.
[8] J. D. Nelsenius to E. Norelius, Jan. 29, 1897, MS.
[9] Nelsenius, J. D., a manuscript account of his experiences in Wisconsin, as given by letters and orally to Dr. N. A. Nelson of Ashland. Now in the Minnesota Conference Archives.
[10] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och dess Förs. Hist.* I, 84; 403; 405; 408; 410.
[11] A. P. Monten to E. Norelius, Feb. 5, 1896, MS.
[12] A. P. Monten to P. Sjöblom, March 22, 1898, MS.
[13] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1941, Statist. Report; 1948, 50.
[14] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och dess Förs. Hist.*, II, 1072f.; Blegen, Theo., *Building Minnesota*, 286.
[15] *Jubelalbum, Första Svenska Evangelisk Lutherska Förs. Duluth, Minn.* 7, 25; Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och dess Förs. Hist.*, II. 1086; *Minn. Conf. Minutes.*
[16] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, statistical reports.
[17] Krantz, J. A., in "Församlingsvännen" quoted in *Jubelalbum Första Svenska Ev. Luth. Församlingen, Duluth*, 44f.
[18] Jubelalbum, *Första Svenska Ev. Luth. Förs., Duluth, Minn.*, 27ff; Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf., och dess Förs. Hist.*, II, 1074, 1105.
[19] *Jubelalbum, Första Sv. Ev. Luth. Förs., Duluth, Minn.*, 32; Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och dess Förs. Hist.*, II, 1077; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1943, 43.
[20] Silfversten, Carl J., *Finlandssvenskarna i Amerika*, 17, 74ff., 268ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, statistical reports.
[21] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och dess Förs. Hist.* II, 110f; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, statistical reports.
[22] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.
[23] *The Lutheran Companion, CIII*, 34, Aug. 21, 1957, 5.
[24] P. O. Hanson to J. Fremling, Feb. 19, 1900, MS; Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och dess Förs. Hist.*, II, 1106ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.
[25] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1925, 44; 1955, 63.
[26] *Minn. Stats-Tid.*, Feb. 6, 1924; C. O. Swan to P. A. Mattson, Jan. 25, 1924, MS.
[27] C. O. Swan to P. A. Mattson, Mar. 3, 1924, MS.
[28] C. O. Swan to P. A. Mattson, Apr. 25, 1924, MS.
[29] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1925, 45.
[30] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1926, 35, 125; 1927, 34, 104; *Aug. Synod Minutes*, 1926, 165f.

Chapter VI

Along The St. Croix

Primeval forests covered more than half of Minnesota when white men came to this region. The Indians were content to live in the woods, hunting, fishing, trapping, harvesting berries, wild rice, and other edibles that nature herself provided. They travelled by canoe on lakes and rivers, and they followed the trails that deer and bear and moose had made through the woods. They found the places where animals had learned to ford streams. White explorers, missionaries, and fur traders benefited by the Indian's knowledge of how to live in the wilderness, and for more than 150 years after the coming of the first white men, the forests of Minnesota remained practically untouched, except for the timber needed in the construction of a few trading posts and missions, and, beginning in 1819, Fort Snelling. Fur trading was the one and only industry in Minnesota.

Soon after the opening of land between the St. Croix and the Mississippi for settlement, the need for lumber was felt, and the first commercial sawmill was built at Marine Mills (now Marine-on-St. Croix) in 1839. Lumbering, Minnesota's second industry, soon reached tremendous proportions. In 1852 the value of Minnesota's lumber crop was $2,500,000. There were 20 lumber companies in the state.[1]

The Big Woods, consisting of oak, elm, maple, linden, and other hardwood trees, extended as far west as the bend of the Minnesota River in south central Minnesota, northward in a narrower belt almost to Canada. West of this lay the prairies, generally treeless except for small groves near lakes and streams. East of the Mississippi, beginning about 50 miles north of where it joins the Minnesota, were the great white pine forests. When lumbering began men spoke broadly and boastfully about the "inexhaustible" pine forests. Conservation of these resources was far from the thoughts of lumber barons who got possession of immense tracts of valuable timber. Recklessly and wastefully the forest was cut down to meet the demands of lumber-hungry builders in Des Moines, Kansas City, St. Louis, Omaha, Rock Island, Topeka, and scores of smaller cities of mid-America. Minnesota lumber was shipped to the eastern states, and even to Europe and the Orient. St. Paul and Minneapolis alone used 300 million feet of lumber in one year—1882. The peak year for lumbering in the St. Croix Valley was 1895. Ten years later the high point of the lumber industry in the state was reached.[2]

Many a newly arrived young Scandinavian found work in the logging camps, as a chopper, a barker, a blacksmith, a cook; or on the drive where the logs were floated downstream to the mills in spring; or in the sawmills. Here the Scandinavian mingled with the Yankees, with Irish and German immigrants, and soon began to learn the first lessons in the language and the ways of America. He also learned something about the geography of Minnesota. Some who came to the forests to cut down trees and float them to the mills came a few years later to esablish farms and homes, communities and churches.

One of the first logging camp roads in the state led north from Stillwater, along the St. Croix River, through Taylors Falls and Sunrise, north into Pine County, and west to Kanabec County. Near this road were the earliest Swedish settlements in Minnesota—in southern Chisago and northern Washington County. The latter, originally known as the Marine congregation, was later called Marine rural congregation, and then Elim, New Scandia, after the name given to the township settled by Scandinavians. Now it is Elim, Scandia. Near it is a monument marking the site of a cabin built in 1850 by three young Swedes, credited as the first Swedish settlers in Minnesota.

"Kichi-saga" is supposed to have been the Indian name for the lake that lay ten miles west of Taylors Falls, where Swedish immigrants began to build homes in 1851. If some of the Swedes with a poetic feeling and a committee of Indians with similar nature had collaborated on the matter, they surely would have left the spelling undisturbed; "Kichi" — lake; "saga" — legendary story. Unfortunately someone with a more prosaic nature shortened it to Chisago.

So it became known as the Chisago Lake region. After the first few years of loneliness for a few settlers in a wilderness, more immigrants arrived. Several townships in northern Washington County, in southern Chisago County, and also in adjacent Isanti County became solidly Swedish. In 1879 there were six congregations in Chisago County with a total of 2,877 baptized members. Washington County had three, with 1,253 members. Isanti had three, with 1,091 members. The total for the three counties was 15 congregations with 5,221 members. Just across the St.Croix River in Wisconsin were five congregations with a total of 661 members. The St. Croix and Rum River valley area constituted one-fourth of the Conference in point of membership.

Chisago Lake Church, Center City, with 1,555 members, was the largest as well as the oldest congregation in the area. John J. Frodeen, a layman teacher at St. Ansgar's Academy, the Conference school at East Union, had been ordained on a call to Chisago Lake in 1875. Under his able leadership the congregation continued to grow, a new church was built in 1882, rebuilt in 1888 after destruction by fire, and two new congregations were organized, Immanuel at Almelund, nine miles northeast, and Trinity, North Branch, 12 miles northwest of Center City, both established in 1887. Almelund was a daughter church of the Chisago Lake congregation, and the charter members at North Branch were mostly from the Spring Lake congregation, just across the line in Isanti County. The youngest Augustana congregation in Chisago County is First Lutheran of Harris, organized in 1891 by Rev. E. G. Thegerstrom of Fish Lake.

In the meantime three new congregations were established in Washington County: at Afton by A. F. Tornell of Stillwater; at South Stillwater (now Bayport) in 1886, also by Tornell; and at Forest Lake in 1888 by Johannes Lundquist of Chisago City. No new congregations have been begun in Washington County since then, but the Bayport congregation was reorganized as a result of a merger with another congregation in 1944.[3]

Thus the pioneer period of mission activity in this area had come to a close in the early nineties. Forty years of work by white men had altered the landscape not a little. Though many of the original wooded tracts still remained there was no longer any wilderness. Only a few small areas still belonged to Isaac Bernheimer and his wife Isabella of New York, who once had owned considerable portions of the region. A few log houses were still in use, but generally the homes were "modern" and comfortable. Roads were being improved. Farmers were buying surreys and top buggies. The St. Paul-Duluth line of the Northern Pacific had been built through Forest Lake, North Branch, and Rush City in 1869, and the completion of the branch from Wyoming to Taylors Falls was hailed with joy as Chisago City, Lindstrom, Center City, and Shafer were given direct connections with the outside world. The first locomotive reached Taylors Falls on October 29, 1880.[4]

Lovely lakeshore scenery, plenty of shade trees, good fishing, at Forest Lake, Chisago City, Lindstrom, Center City, a fascinating bit of nature's wonderland on both sides of the St. Croix at Taylors Falls, all this just 25 to 50 miles from St. Paul and Minneapolis, and three or four trains a day to take you there and home again, this added up to a thriving summer resort business, and a boost for the little villages. Some of the visitors attended church services on Sunday, occasionally. On the other hand, church members became involved in the business of providing entertainment for the city people, which led to serious cases of church discipline.[5]

Contacts with the rest of the world widened the horizons of these communities. But Swedish remained the language of the churches, and the isolation which had characterized some of the rural areas was not quickly broken down by such urbanizing tendencies as flocks of city people enjoying the scenery. Aside from the extra business brought by the summer visitors the region had only one industry—agriculture. None of the villages became large. The population of Chisago and Washington counties has not fluctuated to any great extent since 1900. Stillwater, once the lumber capital of Minnesota, was threatened with decline and eventual extinction when the logging days in the St. Croix Valley ended. But the city survived the shock, and in 1950 had a population of 7,674.

The congregations of Chisago and Washington counties continued to grow until after the turn of the century, and a few of them, notably Forest Lake and Rush City, have grown rapidly in recent years. In 1900 the nine congregations in Chisago County had 6,033 baptized members; in 1905 there were 6,225; in 1957 there were 5,925. The greatest decrease has been in the Chisago Lake Church, from a high of

2,311 in 1905 to 1,318 in 1957. For the same period in Washington County we have these figures: In 1900, 3,090 members; in 1905, 3,474; in 1957, 4,912.[6]

The longest pastorate of anyone who has served in these two counties is that of C. E. Benson, who was pastor in Trinity Church, Stillwater, from 1906 to 1946. During the greater part of this time he also served as Protestant Chaplain at the state penitentiary.

J. T. Kjellgren served 19 years in Scandia, F. M. Eckman 17 years in Center City, Johannes Lundquist 22 years and C. E. Slatt 26 years in Chisago City.

Generally, these congregations and others in the area have gained strength and stability by the fact that pastors have stayed a long time. It has also been a factor in the forming of conservative attitudes and practices in the church life of the region.

Out of these oldest Swedish Lutheran settlements in the Northwest there has been a continuous stream of migration to other parts of Minnesota and adjacent states. Some of the very first settlers at Center City and Scandia stayed only a few years and then moved farther west. Per Anderson—"Joris Pelle"—the founder of the Chisago Lake colony in 1851, moved in 1857 or 1858 to Cambridge, and there he came to a sad ending. On September 14, 1881 he started out from his home to go to a meadow on the west side of Rum River. Being somewhat enfeebled in mind he wandered several miles along the river, and evidently fell into the stream after darkness had overtaken him. His body was found three weeks later.[7]

Daniel Nelson, the founder of the Scandia settlement, moved to Kandiyohi County. Several families from Chisago Lake moved to Meeker County and helped to start the colony which later became Grove City. Langford and Groton, South Dakota, were settled largely by people from Chisago County. Untold numbers of families and individuals left the crowded Swedish communites in Washington, Chisago, and Isanti counties, to settle where land was cheaper, generally farther north and west, but also in Wisconsin.[8]

The village of Lindstrom, scarcely two miles west of Center City, was founded by Swedish immigrants in 1854. By 1855 there were some 60 or 70 inhabitants. Of these one was a blacksmith, one was a sleigh and wagon maker, one was a painter, one a tinner, one a tailor, one a stonemason, and two were storekeepers.[9]

The people in and around Lindstrom belonged to the Chisago Lake Lutheran Church at Center City. But as the village grew and eventually exceeded Center City in population the need of a church in Lindstrom was felt by some, but it was not apparent to the Chisago Lake congregation that such a need was urgent. Indeed, the Chisago City congregation, four miles farther away than Lindstrom, had great difficulty getting the approval of its "mother church" when it was organized in 1874. Eric Norelius expressed his opinion that it was a mistake that no Swedish Lutheran Church was begun in Lindstrom. In 1901 the Synod of the Northwest organized a congregation there.[10]

The once "solidly Swedish Lutheran" areas in southern Chisago County began to receive an intermingling of other nationalities and other faiths after World War I. This trend increased rapidly in the depression years of the thirties, as farm after farm was sold to "outsiders," many of whom were Roman Catholics. A Roman Church was organized in Lindstrom in 1950, with some 35 families, and was named in honor of a Swedish saint, St. Bridget. Chisago County, however, is still the most strongly Lutheran County in Minnesota. According to a report published in 1957, 81 per cent of the church members in the county are Lutherans.[11]

The original division of the Minnesota Conference into districts took place in 1870. The congregations in the St. Croix Valley, the Rum River Valley, as well as St. Paul and Minneapolis, were then included in the St. Paul District.[12]

In the seventies the St. Paul District was extended to Duluth, Superior, and Ashland; in the eighties to the Vermilion Range, and to Brainerd, until it had a total of 42 congregations. In 1887 the Conference authorized division of the St. Paul District into three districts. The Chisago District, organized at the Chisago Lake Church, Center City, on October 5, 1887, consisted of 13 congregations: Center City, Scandia, Taylors Falls, Stillwater, Marine Mills, Chisago City, Afton, South Stillwater, and Almelund in Minnesota; Bethesda (Sand Lake); Balsam, Amery; Star Prairie; Cumberland; and Rice Lake, Wisconsin. Forest Lake and White Bear Lake, Minnesota, and Shell Lake and Clayton, Wisconsin, were added in 1888; and other Wisconsin congregations as follows: New Richmond, 1891; Ebenezer, Amery, 1892; Hudson, 1895; Range, 1905; Hayward, 1907.

In 1909 the district was divided along the state line, the Wisconsin congregations organizing the Apple River District, leaving 11 congregations in the Chisago District. White Bear Lake was transferred to the St. Paul District in 1924, Afton to the Apple River District in 1933, to the St. Paul District in 1946.[13]

It was P. A. Cederstam who as missionary pastor in western Wisconsin laid the foundation for the present Apple River District, when he organized Zion, Trade Lake, 1870; Bethesda at Sand Lake and Balsam, near Range, 1872. The intrepid "apostle of Wisconsin," J. D. Nelsenius, during his 16 years in Ashland, made occasional visits to Cumberland, Shell Lake, Rice Lake, Clayton, and other places. Magnus Spangberg served Sand Lake and Balsam from 1878 to 1889. A. J. Malmquist was pastor of the Rice Lake-Cumberland-Shell Lake parish from 1896 to 1903 and of the Balsam-Range parish, 1908-1915. Jonas Magny had been the first student at the school in Red Wing which congregation was a farm family by the name of David Carlsons. Two of their sons became pastors in the Augustana Church. One, Dr. Edgar Carlson, is today president of Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota. The other, Rev. Arnold Carlson, is professor of systematic theology in Augustana Theological Seminary, Rock Island, Illinois. Magny had been the first student at the school in Red Wing which was the forerunner of Gustavus Adolphus, and the solicitor for funds for the College after it was moved to St. Peter.

As mentioned above, the Apple River District was organized in 1909. The district had 16 congregations in 1910, extending from Shell Lake in the north to Moon Valley, near Hudson, in the south. There were 2,726 baptized members. The largest congregation was Bethesda, Sand Lake, with 644 members.

Fifteen years later the District had 21 congregations, with a total of 2,971 baptized members. Bethesda was still the largest congregation but its membership had declined to 446.

According to the 1957 statistics the district has a total of 22 congregations with 4,756 baptized members. The largest congregations are First, Amery, 377 members; Augustana, Cumberland, 373; and Pilgrim, Frederic, 337.

A number of small congregations organized in the 80's and 90's have been dissolved: Glen Flora, New Richmond, Star Prairie, Sterling, and Moon Valley.

The most recently organized congregation in the Apple River District is Faith at Balsam Lake, organized in 1944 under the leadership of Verner Granquist, pastor at Centuria.

The Minnesota Conference was organized in the Chisago Lake Church at Center City on October 8, 1858. In that place, though in a new church building the Conference celebrated its 25th anniversary October 30-November 5, 1883. Dr. Eric Norelius was the main speaker. Again in 1898 the Conference gathered in Center City, October 4-9, to celebrate the 40th anniversary. And again Norelius gave the main anniversary address. Others who appeared on the program were Dr. J. Fremling, the Conference president; Dr. F. M. Eckman, pastor at Center City; and several of the pioneer pastors, Cederstam, Beckman, Sjöblom; and one sermon in English by Dr. J. P. Uhler of Gustavus Adolphus College, who spoke of "The Lutheran Church as the Young People's Church."

The 50th anniversary of the Conference was observed in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Center City, October 7-11, 1908. Only the Sunday services on the 11th were held in Center City. Speakers were Dr. J. G. Dahlberg, Dr. J. Fremling, Dr. J. O. Cavallin, and Dr. Norelius.

The historical addresses given by Norelius in 1883 and 1898 were published in a volume entitled "Minnen of Minnesota—Konferensens 25—och 40—års—fester. Tvenne tal of E. Norelius." (Printed 1898 by Lutheran Augustana Book Concern.) They are valuable for the information given about the early history of the Conference. A larger volume "Till Minne of Minnesota—Konferensens of Augustana Synod 40—års—fest Chisago Lake, Minn., den 4-9 okt. 1898," was edited by F. M. Eckman. It contains all the sermons and addresses given at the 40th anniversary.

Eckman was elected to edit a more ambitious publication in connection with the 50th anniversary, a history of the Conference, containing a short summary of the history of each congregation, with pictures of all the churches, a picture and a short biography of each pastor, besides general articles on the Conference institutions. The book, entitled ‘Minnesskrift 1858-1908 tillegnad Minnesota — Konferensens of Ev. Luterska Augustana—Synoden 50—års Jubileum” has 254 pages, 8 x 10½ inches in size. It contains pictures of approximately 180 pastors and lay leaders, and 256 churches.

The 70th anniversary of the Conference was observed in connection with the 75th anniversary of the Chisago Lake congregation, in May, 1929. By cooperation of the Conference and the congregation a historical marker was erected near the church. It consists of a granite obelisk, thirty feet in height. The block which has the historical inscriptions is of black granite from Småland, Sweden. The inscription gives information about organization of both the congregation and the Conference. A two-volume Swedish history of the Conference, written by Emil Lund, had been published in 1926. A smaller history in English, written by P. A. Mattson, J. A. Krantz, and Victor E. Lawson, was published in 1929 under the title “The Beginnings and Progress of Minnesota Conference.” Speakers at the festivities included Minnesota's governor Theodore Christianson; Bishop Hjalmar Danell of Skara, Sweden; L. D. Coffman, president of the University of Minnesota; and others.

The 90th anniversary of the Conference was observed in Center City in May, 1948. A volume entitled “A Church Is Planted, The Story of the Lutheran Minnesota Conference, 1851-1876,” by Emeroy Johnson, was published by the Conference. One of the speakers at this anniversary was Governor Luther W. Youngdahl. At the time this is being written plans are under way for the observance of the centennial of the Conference in Center City, April 29-May 2, 1958.

NOTES

[1] Blegen, *Building Minnesota*, 254.

[2] op. cit. 254, 256.

[3] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och Dess Förs. Hist.*, I, 378; II, 908; Eckman, F. M., *Minnesskrift, 1858-1908*, 44ff.; Johnson, Emeroy, *Chisago Lake Ev. Lutheran Church, 1854-1954*, 51ff.

[4] *Minn. Stats. Tidning*, Nov. 4, 1880.

[5] Johnson, Emeroy, *op. cit.*, 57.

[6] *Minn.-Konf. Prot.*, Statistical reports.

[7] *Isanti County Press*, Cambridge, Minn., Sept. 22, Oct. 6, 1881; *Minn. Stats-Tid.*, Oct. 13, 1881.

[8] Norelius, Eric, *De Svensks Luthersks Förs. och Svenskarnes Hist. i Amerika*, I, 603; Johnson, Emeroy, *Early Life of Eric Norelius*, 302f.; Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och Dess Förs. Hist.*, II, 829, 833; 1055f.; I, 390, 403.

[9] Daniel Lindstrom to Anders Lindstrom, Dec. 1, 1885. Published in *Chisago County Press* (Lindstrom) Jan. 26, 1956.

[10] Johnson, Emeroy, *Chisago Lake Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1854-1954,* 52, 65f.; Norelius, Eric, *De Svenska Lutherska Församlingarnas och Svenskarnes Historia i Amerika,* II, 321.

[11] *Churches and Church Membership in the United States,* National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., Series C, No. 10.

[12] *Minn.-Konf. Prot.* Sept. 3-7, 1870.

[13] *Minn. Conf. Minutes.*

Chapter VII

When The Forests Were Gone

Pine County was well named, a century ago. Now the traveller along Highway 61 sees only a lonesome pine here and there, but there was a time when almost every acre was covered with magnificent white pine forests.

In the heyday of logging and lumbering in Pine County hundreds of Swedish immigrants found a Paul Bunyan size job in the camps or in the sawmills of the region. Hinckley, a thriving mill town in the early eighties, had a growing colony of Swedes.

The first Swedish Lutheran pastor to conduct divine services in Hinckley was N. J. Brink of Fish Lake, a rural community in Chisago County. After several visits, during which preparations were made for the establishment of a congregation, this was accomplished in 1883 under the leadership of Rev. Fredrick Peterson of Rush City. The congregation was small, and little progress was made, as no permanent leadership was available until in 1894, when Rev. Gustaf Peterson accepted a call to serve Rush City and Hinckley. He began his work in May of that year.

On September 1 Hinckley and Sandstone, and large areas of land in Pine County, were devastated by one of the most destructive forest fires in the history of the United States. No less than 413 lives were lost, 197 of these in Hinckley. Eight of the victims were members of the Swedish Lutheran Church. The ones who survived had lost their homes and their possessions. The church building was a total loss and there was no insurance.

The congregations throughout the Minnesota Conference rose to the occasion, contributing not only to the general aid fund which received nation-wide support, but for the specific purpose of rebuilding the Swedish Lutheran Church. When it was dedicated by Eric Norelius in August, 1895, it was completely equipped and fully paid for through the gifts of friends and fellow-Christians.

Rev. Peterson continued to serve the parish and also to visit the Swedish settlements elsewhere in the county. He organized a congregation at Dell Grove, nine miles north of Hinckley, in 1896. At Pine Lake, six miles west of Finlayson, he found 13 Swedish families, and expressed the belief that some more were coming, and that a congregation would be organized soon. At Sandstone there were 200 Swedes and more were expected "when work begins in the big stone quarries." He had promised to visit the congregation at Sturgeon Lake once a month. But to visit three other places once a month, he said, was impossible for him, and he suggested that a student be called to the region, with Sandstone as headquarters. The Conference president, Norelius, mentioned the old pioneer pastor P. A. Cederstam as a possible candidate for home missionary in the Sandstone area. Peterson replied:

"It would be good to have the [66 year old] veteran Cederstam up here, but since the field is new and there are no conveniences to offer him, I do not advise him to come. I think you old fathers who have broken the ground and built up so many congregations ought to have a little rest in your old days." Peterson continued to serve the Rush City-Hinckley parish until 1902. In 1913, when he himself was a veteran, 65 years old, he again accepted a call to Hinckley, and for nine years served Hinckley, Dell Grove, Sandstone, and two congregations at Bruno. After his retirement, at the age of 74, he served as vice pastor at Pine Grove and West Rock, in Pine County, from 1923 to 1928.[1]

Possibly he enjoyed the benefit of some conveniences that Cederstam would have lacked in 1896. The Great Northern railroad between St. Paul and Duluth, through Cambridge, Braham, Mora, Hinckley, Sandstone, Askov, and Bruno was completed in 1899. Before Gustaf Peterson retired in 1922 there was a paved road connecting the Twin Cities and Duluth.

The congregations in Pine County generally were small. Much of the cutover land was poorly suited for agriculture, but dairying prospered in some areas. When the forests were all gone and lumbering ceased there were no other substantial industries to make up for the loss of employment.

The congregation at Hinckley declined from a membership of 220 baptized members in 1908 to 127 in 1933, but has increased again to 340 in 1957. The Sandstone congregation dwindled down to the vanishing point in 1923. Under the leadership of the Board of American Missions a new congregaton was organized in 1945, which now (1957) has 350 baptized members. The two small congregations, Pine Grove and West Rock, have been dissolved, and a new congregation was organized in Pine City, 1946, which in 1957 had 449 baptized members. The Minnesota Conference today has six congregations in Pine County, with a total of 1,536 baptized members.[2]

Isanti County had a strong Swedish colony before the Civil War, and a congregation was organized at Cambridge in 1864. A large percentage of the Swedes in the county were Baptists, and doctrinal dissension was bitter at times. However, the Cambridge Lutheran Church flourished under the leadership of such pastors as Jonas Auslund (1870-71), A. Engdahl (1872-1884), J. P. Neander (1885-1896), Alfred Bergin (1897-1904). In 1884, when Engdahl resigned, the congregation had 674 members, and by 1900 there were 860. Engdahl organized the Salem congregation at Dalbo in 1874; the Athens (now Faith) congregaton at Isanti in 1878; and at Rice Lake in 1879 (the Rice Lake congregation was later merged with Braham Lutheran Church). The village of Braham was established in 1899, about two miles from the Rice Lake Church. A new church was built in Braham in 1907, but the congregation in the village was not organized until 1920, when C. O. Thunberg was the pastor. Rice Lake was merged with the Braham congregation in 1932, which has grown to a membership of 788.[3]

A few glimpses into the life of the Cambridge parish are revealed in letters written by Alfred Bergin, when he served as pastor of the parish:

"Prayer meetings on Thursday evenings all the year around are fairly well attended, and many take part. Even some women pray at these meetings. . . . There are seven different mission societies. . . . We have English services every other Sunday evening. Some of the Sunday school children and some catechumens are being instructed in English. There is a little German settlement near here, and it has happened that on the same day I have preached in Swedish, English, and German."[4]

On the other side of the ledger, spiritually, were such comments as these: "It is difficult to get children to the confirmation class. Some children of members are never confirmed. It seems that even children become heroes in sin, swearing, drinking, card-playing. Since saloons were voted in, drinking has increased."[5]

A suggestion that the Cambridge women should belong to the Women's Missionary Society of the Augustana Synod received the following colorful but blunt reply: "We have lifted an offering of nearly $40.00 for the Synod's Missionary Society, but we are not at all in favor of more government by women than is necessary. Mrs. Fremling is heartily welcome to organize all the pastors' wives she wants to at the [Conference] meeting, but the **congregation's women have enough organizations.** My views on Mrs. [Emmy] Evald's fabrications, her emancipation harangues, and her tear-spiced declamatory outpouring are such that I dare not express them with pen and ink."[6]

A state hospital was established at Cambridge in 1930. During the pastorate of Harold E. Peterson in the Cambridge Lutheran Church, 1935-1951, an effective ministry to the hospital patients was inaugurated. The congregation, which at present numbers 1,288 baptized members, is the largest in the St. Croix District.

The Fish Lake congregation, a rural church ten miles east of Cambridge, in Chisago County, had 630 members in 1882, and was then the 9th largest congregation in the Conference, but like the great majority of rural congregations has declined gradually, and today has 219. The church is located at the little village of Stark, named after L. J. Stark, one of the first Swedish settlers in Minnesota, and the first Swede to be elected to the state legislature, in 1864. He was then a resident of the Chisago Lake community, but moved to Fish Lake township in 1867. The Fish Lake congregation was served by Rev. Peter A. Pihlgren 27 years, 1893-1920, and by Rev. A. William Nordin 26 years, 1921-1947.

Spring Lake, four miles west of North Branch, was originally one of the "districts" of the Fish Lake congregation, but was organized as a separate congregation in 1874. From 1888 until 1910 Spring Lake was served by Gustaf Wahlund. In 1900 the congregation had 716 members, and a church which had the distinction of having twin steeples. This building was destroyed by fire in 1941, after which a brick church was built. The membership of the congregation has declined to 303 in 1957.[7]

The Trinity congregation in North Branch (originally called Swedish Lutheran) was organized by members from Fish Lake and Spring Lake who had moved to the village. From a small beginning in 1887 the congregation increased to 488 in 1900 and to 808 in 1910. With some variations up and down the figure has remained at about this level.

The early beginnings of Swedish Lutheran missionary efforts in the Rush City area date back to the 1850's, but the first Swedish settlers moved away. Others came in the 60's, and the Rush Lake congregation (now Calvary, Rush Point) was organized in 1870, five miles west of Rush City, and First Lutheran Church in the village in 1876. Rush Lake was organized by Jonas Auslund of Cambridge, Rush City by N. J. Brink of Fish Lake. Though Rush City has been the largest village in Chisago County, the First Lutheran Church, as long as the Swedish language was used, experienced rather slow growth. In 1925 there were 281 baptized members. It more than doubled its membership between 1930 and 1945. The latest figure (1957) is 722.

The First Lutheran congregation in Harris was organized in 1891 by Rev. E. G. Thegerstrom of Fish Lake. Services had been held there previous to that time by Rev. John Fremling of Fish Lake. The Harris congregation had attained a membership of 240 in 1920, and has remained at about this figure.

Salem, Dalbo, was organized in 1874 by Rev. A. Engdahl of Cambridge. In 1891 Rev. J. P. Leaf of Dalbo organized Siloa, Maple Ridge. These two rural congregations have formed a parish.

Engdahl organized the Athens (now Faith) congregation at Isanti in 1876. It was considered a part of the Cambridge congregation until 1888, when it was received into the Conference.

The Bradford congregation in Isanti county was organized by Rev. A. F. Tornell of Anoka in 1891. It has been renamed "Long Lake." Since 1897 it has formed a parish with Isanti.

Salem, Stacy (originally Oxford) is a small congregation organized 1922, and forming a parish with Trinity, North Branch.

In 1957 the Conference had eight congregations in Isanti County, with a total of 3,282 members.[8]

Kanabec County, with its wealth of white pine, attracted the logging industry in the 60's, the 70's, and the 80's. When the timber was gone, small settlements sprang up. The first store and the first post office in the county were at Brunswick, where the Groundhouse River joins the Snake. A considerable number of Swedish people settled there and a Lutheran Church was organized in 1885 by Rev. J. P. Leaf of Dalbo. The Brunswick congregation was added to his parish until 1895.

Grasston was established a few miles from Brunswick when the Great Northern was built. A congregation was organized there in 1915 by Rev. C. S. Renius of Braham. Brunswick and Grasston have constituted a parish since 1917. The Brunswick congregation has increased gradually in membership to 367 in 1957, but the Grasston congregation has declined in membership the past 20 years.

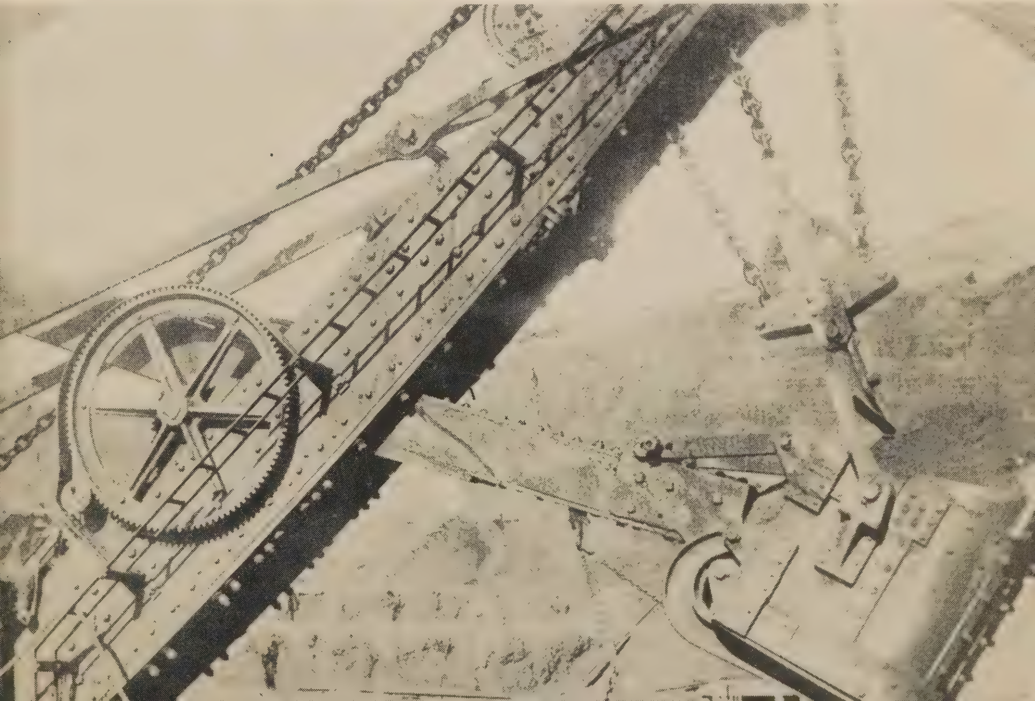
Mora, the county seat and the largest village in Kanabec County, had a few Swedish settlers as early as 1885, and a congregation was organized by J. P. Leaf in 1891. Occasional services were held in the Methodist or the Presbyterian church, but the little Lutheran congregation had a very tenuous hold on life. In 1901 the 23 remaining members built a church, but Mora was a neglected field for many years, until it secured a resident pastor in 1917. A new church was built in 1938. Growth of the village since highways were improved has been reflected in rapid growth of the congregation in the past 20 years. The present membership is 608.[9]

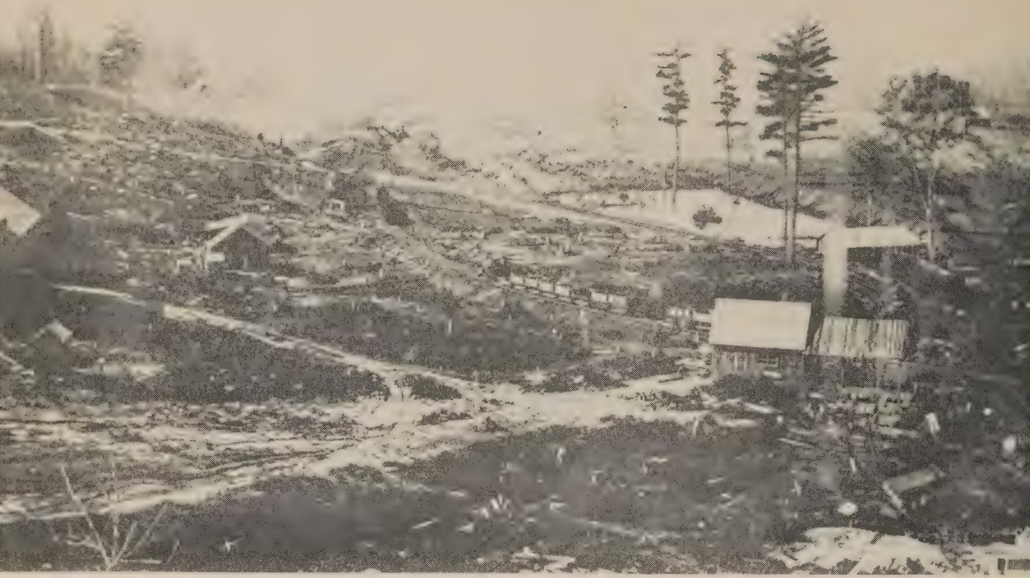
The three congregations of the Minnesota Conference in Kanabec County had 1,142 members in 1957.

District names and boundaries have been changed several times. When the Duluth District was divided in 1891, the southern part of it, including Isanti, Kanabec, most of Pine, and the western part of Chisago County, and also Burnett and part of Polk County, Wisconsin, was named the Fish Lake District. A few years later the name was changed to St. Croix Valley. In 1909 the district was divided, with

Minnesota Valley R.R., St. P. & Sioux City Railway later now (1909) part of C. St. P., M. & O. Ry. Cos., Chicago Northwestern Rwy. Scene at St. Peter Depot about 1870

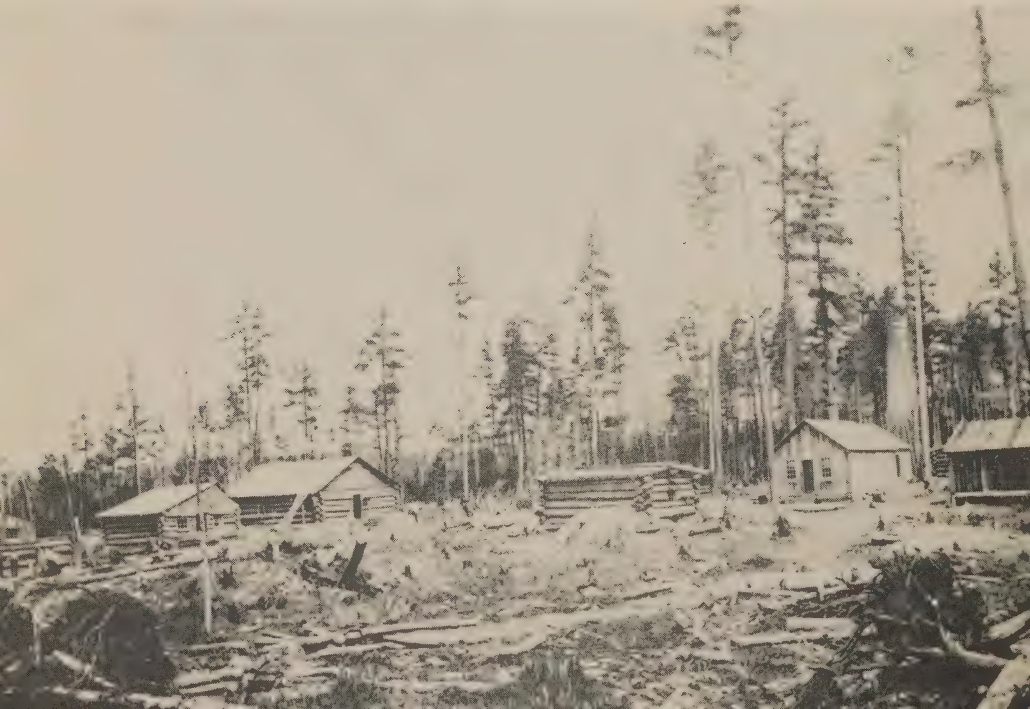
Open pit mining on the Mesabi Range (reproduced from Collection of the Library of Congress)





First pit of ore on the Iron Range, Mountain Iron, Minnesota, 1890

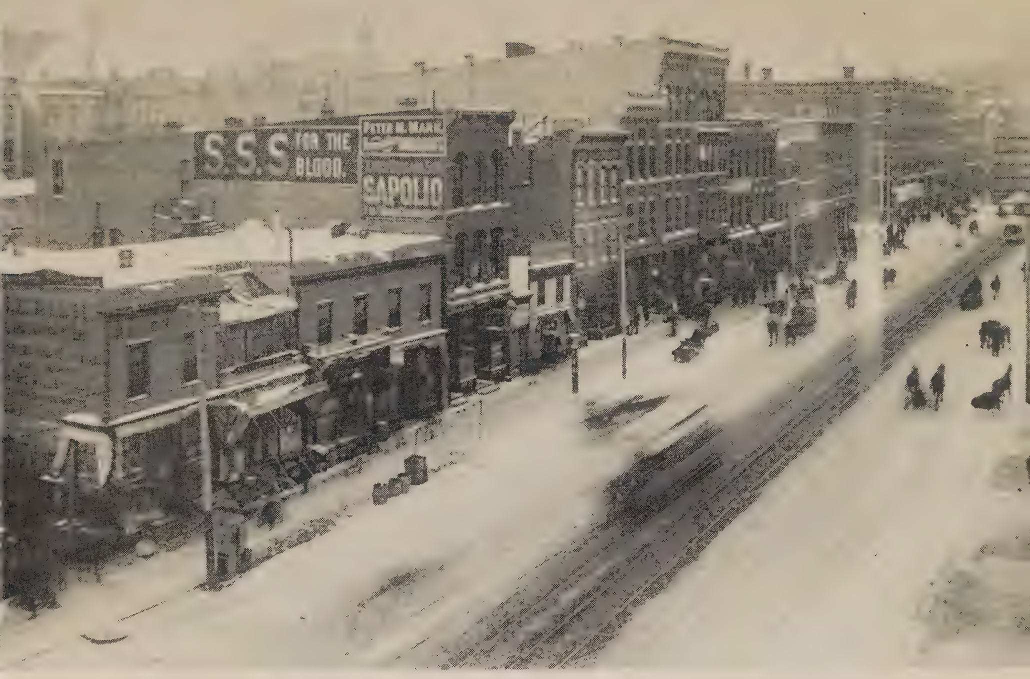
First mining camp built on Mesabi Range, 1889, near Mountain Iron, Minnesota



A typical Aitkin County, Minnesota logging scene before the turn of the century. Logging was one of the most important industries in Aitkin County since its organization in the 1870's.

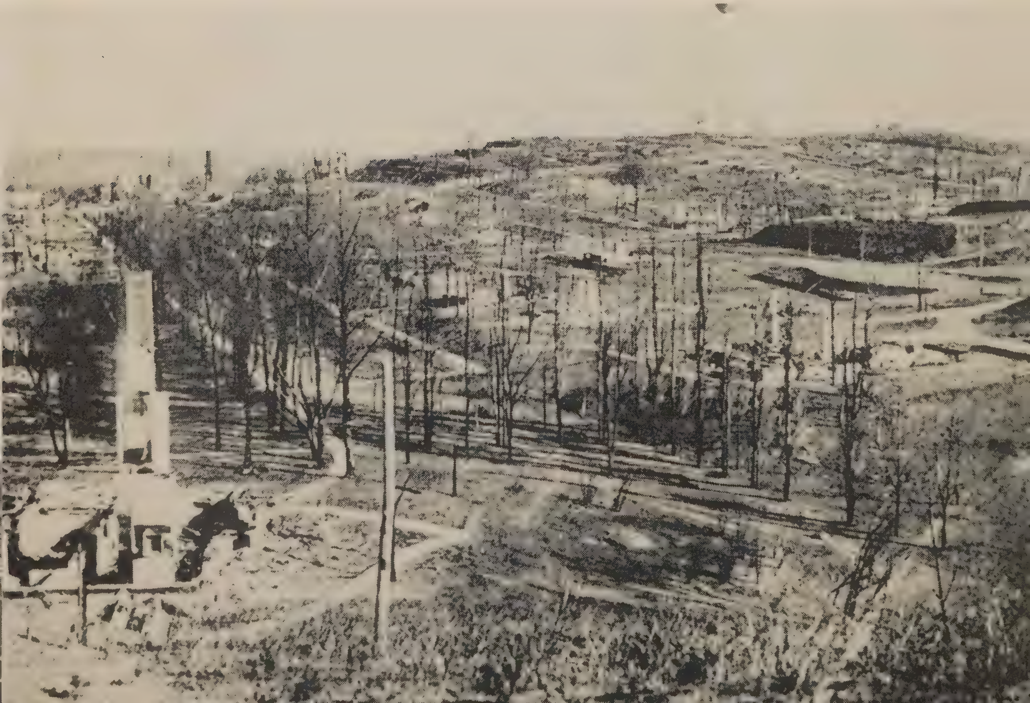
First locomotive to reach St. Peter, St. Paul & Sioux City R.R., 1870

SIOUX CITY
ST P S.C.R.R.


S.S.S FOR THE BLOOD.
SAPOLIO

Washington Avenue, Minneapolis, Corner Second Avenue South and Washington, 1885

Cloquet after the fire in 1918



the congregations in Isanti County (except Spring Lake and Oxford), Pine County (except Pine Grove and West Rock), and Kanabec County being included in the Cambridge District.

In 1935 the two districts were merged into one, called the St. Croix District, but the congregations in Wisconsin were transferred to the Apple River District.

The St. Croix District now (1957) consists of 22 congregations with a total of 5,764 communicant members and 2,531 children, or 8,295 baptized members.[10]

NOTES

[1] Blegen, Theo. M., *Building Minnesota*, 383; Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och Dess Förs. Hist.*, II, 935ff.; G. Peterson to E. Norelius, Apr. 1, 1896; Apr. 6, 1896, MSS, Aug.; *Korsbaneret 1937*, 188ff.

[2] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[3] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och Dess Förs. Hist.* II, 917, 919, 926f.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[4] Alfred Bergin to P. Sjöblom, Jan. 2, 1901 MS.

[5] Alfred Bergin to J. Fremling, Jan. 1, 1902 MS.

[6] A. Bergin to J. Fremling, April 21, 1900, MS. Fremling was Conference President. The Conference convention was held in Cambridge May 22-29, 1900. Mrs. Evald was the leader in the Augustana Women's Missionary Society, which was organized in Lindsborg, Kansas, in 1892. The Minnesota Conference W.M.S. was not organized until 1907, in Minneapolis.

[7] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och Dess Förs. Hist.*, II, 879ff., 894f.

[8] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och Dess Förs. Hist.*, II, 879ff., 919ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[9] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och Dess Förs. Hist.*, II, 924f.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[10] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1891, 1909, 1935, 1957.

Chapter VIII

The Mille Lacs Region

"This new settlement, on the south shore of Mille Lacs, has an extraordinarily beautiful location. Because of the excellent forest of mixed hardwood and evergreen trees, this must be a healthful place...

"I have not yet had time to find out how many people live here, but to judge by the gathering we have had today they are not so few in number. Best of all, most of them seem to be devoted to our Evangelical Lutheran Church, and love and appreciate the Word of God and the holy sacraments. Among these people are some who previously have belonged to our older congregations and have been nurtured there. We were heartily welcomed by these people.

"Therefore we have here an open door for our work and if we could maintain regular services we could have a self-sustaining parish soon, with its own pastor, for there are three new settlements along the shore within a distance of 15 miles, each with its own post office: South Harbor, Lawrence, and Opstead. These could easily form a parish. This field is well worth taking care of, even if it should cost the Conference something at first . . ."[1]

This was the optimistic view of prospects along the southeast shore of Mille Lacs, as seen by Rev. Fredrick Peterson in 1896. He showed good faith by coming there the next year to serve the new congregation that was organized at South Harbor (now Isle). But the settlements along the lake did not grow and develop as he had expected. At Opstead a congregation was begun in 1905, but it has been dissolved. At Malmo a congregation was organized in 1919. Isle and Malmo have become a parish with a resident pastor. This took place just 60 years after Peterson's first visit.[2]

In a general way he was right in his estimate of the prospects around Mille Lacs. Several flourishing towns had already been established in central Minnesota: St. Cloud, Brainerd, Little Falls, Milaca, Aitkin, and many smaller ones. St. Cloud had been an important river town since territorial days, and was becoming a trade center for a large area. Brainerd boomed rapidly when Northern Pacific shops and other special facilities were built there. Little Falls had been a lumber town since 1856. Milaca and Aitkin were more recent sawmill towns.

Swedish laborers found their way to Brainerd about 1870 and Rev. Ephraim Görlander of Duluth organized a congregation in 1872. This early attempt, however, died for lack of care. A new start was made in 1882 when Rev. Jonas Magny was sent by the Conference as missionary to Brainerd. He spent several weeks in preparation for establishing a congregation. The actual organization took place under the leadership of Rev. N. J. Brink of Fish Lake. The name originally chosen, Clara Lutheran Church, was changed to First Lutheran in 1929.

Lots for church and parsonage were secured in 1882, and under the guidance of student A. Melin a church was built the same year. The first resident pastor, Rev. J. G. Hultkrans, served from 1888 to 1891. During his pastorate a parsonage was built and the congregation became self-sustaining. Growth of the congregation soon made the original small church obsolete. A new one was built in 1915 when Rev. Elof Carlson was pastor. In September, 1957, this building was partially destroyed by fire, which will necessitate rebuilding of the structure.

The industries that originally made Brainerd a busy city had practically ceased by 1930. For some years in the thirties the First Lutheran congregation declined in membership, reflecting the downward trend in the city. With the coming of paved roads, Brainerd has become a gateway to the lake country where multitudes of tourists find relaxation and pleasure. The First Lutheran congregation has more than tripled its membership in the past 20 years. There were 1,054 members in 1957.[3]

Among the Swedish immigrants who had settled at Brainerd in the nineties was a young couple, Fred and Anna Anderson. They had a son whom they named Clyde Elmer. He finished high school in Brainerd and went to the University of Minnesota a year and a half. This was in the depression years of the 1930's, and he found it necessary to quit school and go to work. He built up a little business selling magazines, which proved to be quite successful over the years.

When the Republican party, in 1938, wanted to make a determined effort to defeat the Farmer-Labor state officers, they nominated Harold E. Stassen of South St. Paul and C. Elmer Anderson of Brainerd. They were elected, and Mr. Anderson became the first Augustana man ever to hold the office of lieutenant governor of Minnesota. He was re-elected together with Mr. Stassen in 1940. But in 1942, when Stassen announced that he would resign to join the Navy a few months after election, he persuaded the voters to elect Edward J. Thye as lieutenant governor.

After Thye had served as lieutenant governor and governor, he was elected to the U. S. Senate in 1946. Luther W. Youngdahl was elected governor and C. Elmer Anderson was once again back in his old familiar place as lieutenant governor. Re-elected in 1948 and again in 1950, he was in line for succession to the governorship when Luther Youngdahl resigned in the fall of 1951. Thus the soft-spoken C. Elmer Anderson from Brainerd became the second Augustana member to serve as chief executive of the state of Minnesota. He was elected to a full term in 1952.

Elmdale township forms the southwestern corner of Morrison County. In this corner farming was begun immediately after the Civil War. Danes were the first homesteaders, and Swedes began to arrive in 1872. The first pastor to visit there was a Norwegian, Rev. T. Moen. In 1879 a few of these Scandinavians met in the home of Andrew Johnson and organized "Sandvikens Swedish Lutheran congregation." Moen was called to serve as pastor, and the Norwegian service was to be used. This arrangement continued until 1884, after which nothing more is heard of the Sandvikens congregation.

Sjöblom, the Conference president, for many years pastor in Red Wing, had moved to Fergus Falls in 1887, and labored as a home missionary in northwestern Minnesota and eastern North Dakota. He came to Elmdale township in 1888 and organized the Gethsemane Lutheran Church. He continued to make occasional visits, a log church was built, and the congregation grew. A new church was built in 1893 in the newly established village of Upsala. When the congregation welcomed its first resident pastor in 1899 there were 267 baptized members. It continued to grow, and reached a figure of 377 in 1910. It has declined slowly, to 294 in 1930, and 278 in 1957.[4]

Morrison County is cut into two parts by the Mississippi River. The white pine forests were abundant on the eastern side and had even crossed the river in some places.[5] At a point where the river tumbled over a ledge and a rocky cataract, a sawmill was built in 1856, and the village of Little Falls was established. By 1890 there were 2,354 people. Two years later there were 4,699. The reason for the sudden increase was the erection of a new and large sawmill in 1891.

A large part of the population of Little Falls and the surrounding regions was of Roman Catholic faith. The sawmill and other industries attracted Swedish laborers also. Occasional visits were made by Lutheran pastors and students in the eighties, but no definite results were recorded until in 1892, when student N. N. Glim preached in Little Falls and made preparations for the establishment of a congregation. It was organized the same year by Jonas Magny, and was named the Bethel Lutheran Church.

A rural congregation, the Immanuel Lutheran of Darling, was organized in 1893, five miles from Little Falls. These two congregations and Gethsemane, Elmdale (Upsala), shared the services of a pastor for a year, after which Bethel and Immanuel formed a parish. Zion, Freedhem (originally called Halfway Creek) was organized in 1900, 12 miles from Little Falls, and was added to the parish. In 1921 Bethany congregation, also 12 miles from Little Falls, was organized, and became a part of the parish.

The sawmill in Little Falls ceased operations in 1918, an event which caused a temporary decline in the city, and in the Bethel congregation. The congregation had 374 baptized members in 1920, but the number diminished to 122 in 1930. Rev. M. A. Henrickson served as pastor, 1929-1939, and during these years a new period of growth began. The membership in 1940 was 167. At the present time it is 425.

A small rural congregation was organized a few miles from Darling in 1896, known at first as the Scandia Valley congregation. It was organized by L. A. Hocanzon. For a few years, 1903-1909, Darling and Scandia Valley formed a parish, after which the latter was moved to Pillager, and renamed the First Lutheran Church.

Two other small rural congregations have been organized in Morrison County, but have been dissolved after an existence of only a few years.[6]

Aitkin County had a few Swedish settlers as early as 1883. Missionary visits were made by student Gustaf Wahlund, Rev. C. A. Hultkrans, and J. P. Leaf. Peter Sjöblom organized the Maria congregation of Aitkin in 1888. Another rural congregation, Bethlehem, was organized in 1891 by Rev. J. S. Ryding of Cloquet. C. J. Collin of Duluth organized a congregation in the village of Aitkin in 1892. Originally named St. Paul's Lutheran Church, it has been renamed First Lutheran. The Maria congregation has been merged with First Lutheran. The Bethesda congregation, six miles from Aitkin, was organized by Rev. E. J. Peterson in 1917.

The rural congregations have remained small. The First Lutheran Church in Aitkin has had a rather slow but steady growth, and now (1957) has 436 baptized members.[7]

A group of Swedish immigrants who had been recruited for work on the construction of the Northern Pacific, about 1875, stayed for a time on their job, but several took homesteads in the vicinity of Deerwood and settled there. Norwegians had also settled in the same area, and a Swedish-Norwegian Lutheran congregation was organized by J. G. Hultkrans in 1890. This was dissolved in 1906, and a Swedish Lutheran congregation was then established (later named Salem).[8]

When the Mesabi range began shipping iron ore in 1891 other areas of Minnesota were being studied as to possible sources of more such wealth. A surveyor named Cuyler Adams thought, as early as 1895, that there was iron in the vicinity of Aitkin, but it was not until 1911 that the first ore was shipped from the Cuyuna Range. The ore on this range was found to be high in manganese content. While the amount of ore does not compare with that on the Mesabi Range, the Cuyuna Range has contributed a great deal to the economy of the state. Crosby and Ironton, a few miles from Deerwood, became the center of activity on the Cuyuna Range.

In 1912 J. A. Krantz, Duluth, then Conference president, organized the Immanuel Lutheran Church of Crosby. It has formed a parish together with Deerwood. For a number of years the Immanuel congregation had a very small membership, but in the last ten years it has tripled in size, from 275 to 808 members.[9]

The Dalnas congregation at Cuyuna, organized in 1913 four miles from Crosby, has been dissolved.

A congregation organized at Pine River in Cass County in 1905 has been merged with a nearby congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Palisade, a village 20 miles from Aitkin, was settled by Scandinavians, most of whom were Finland Swedes. Rev. J. A. Gustafson of Aitkin began to conduct services there in 1915, and his successor, Rev. E. J. Peterson, organized the Bethel Lutheran congregation in 1917. It has 210 baptized members.[10]

St. Cloud, the "Granite City" of Minnesota, has a history dating back to territorial days, gaining its early importance from its position on the banks of the Mississippi. Settled largely by German Catholics, it has become the center of a strong Roman diocese, reputed to be one of the strongest in the United States. About 70 per cent of the population of the city now are Roman Catholics. Some of the surrounding rural territory is almost solidly Roman.

Swedish immigrants were not attracted to St. Cloud until in the eighties. In 1883 Rev. J. D. Nelsenius of Anoka found a small group of Swedish people and after several visits he aided them in organizing the Salem Lutheran Church. The little group of 23 charter members built a church the same year. The first resident pastor was J. A. Carlstrom who was there from 1889 to 1895. J. A. Johanson served from 1896 to 1907.

St. Cloud is the site of several large institutions, the State Reformatory, a State College, and a Veterans Hospital, in addition to various industries, and it has grown to be the fifth largest city in Minnesota. The Salem congregation, however, increased slowly in membership, having 105 baptized members in 1905, and 289 in 1930. A new church built in 1906 was replaced with a more adequate building in 1957. The present membership is 721. The church is located at Fourth Avenue Southeast, a few blocks from the main business center.[11]

Mille Lacs County had some of the finest stands of white pine to be found in Minnesota, according to lumbermen who came to the region in the early logging days. It was the edge of the pine forests, where they bordered on and intermingled with hardwood groves. Twenty-five miles south of Lake Mille Lacs there was a large oak forest, and at this place a village named Oak City sprang up when the Great Northern railroad was built in 1882. A sawmill was erected there in 1884. A few years later the name of the village was changed to Milaca.

Swedish immigrants were among the earliest settlers, one of them being an enterprising man from Anoka, B. E. Erickson, who started a real estate business and helped many of his countrymen to establish farm homes. He and his family also were charter members of the Zion Lutheran Church which was organized in 1893 under the leadership of Rev. J. A. Frost of St. Paul.

During the years 1893 to 1900 the congregation was served by several theological students, two of whom were destined to be Conference presidents, Peter Peterson in Illinois and O. A. Elmquist in California. Another student, J. E. Carlson, was in Milaca in 1894 and 1895. In spite of the fact that forest fires raged in the area in the fall of 1894, at the time of the Hinckley fire, the Zion congregation, numbering about 60 adult members, built a church, which was used for services on Christmas morning for the first time.

The first resident pastor, Erik Hedeen, came in the fall of 1900. There has been a gradual increase of membership, and the congregation moved into a new church on Christmas Day, 1914, 20 years to the day after the first service in the original church. The congregation now (1957) has 721 baptized members.[12]

The Immanuel Lutheran Church of Bock, five miles from Milaca, was organized in 1894 by J. P. Leaf of Dalbo. Sunday school had been begun several years previous to that time by the Swedish settlers themselves. The first resident pastor was Rev. J. Alb. Johnson, who served from 1904 to 1909. The congregation at this time (1957) has a membership of 229.[13]

The Salem Lutheran Church of Milo was organized in 1896 by Rev. Andrew Jackson of Rush Lake. Originally out in the country, the church has been moved to Foreston.

At Ronneby the Gustavus Adolphus congregation was organized by Rev. J. A. Johnson of St. Cloud in 1906, and belonged with St. Cloud as a parish for some years. The Ronneby congregation was relocated in Foley in 1954 and a new church was built.

Dr. P. A. Mattson organized Gethsemane, Oak Park, in 1921.

Elim, Onamia, was organized in 1909, but was dissolved in 1923. A new congregation, Bethany, was organized in Onamia in 1926.

Immanuel, Hillman, and Emmanuel, Platte Lake, were originally congregations of the former Ohio Synod, and have been transferred to the Minnesota Conference—Hillman in 1938, and Platte Lake in 1948.[14]

A small Swedish colony had been begun in Greenbush township, Sherburne County, near Princeton, in the nineties. Student O. A. Elmquist of Milaca was the first one to preach in the colony. A congregation was organized by Johanson of St. Cloud in 1900. It was named Sharon Lutheran Church.

The Emanuel Lutheran Church of Princeton was organized by Rev. E. O. Stone of Minneapolis in 1904. The name was changed to Trinity Lutheran in 1935.

J. E. Carlson was the first resident pastor of the Princeton-Greenbush parish in 1906-1907.

A congregation organized at Zimmerman in 1898 was dissolved in 1931.[15]

The first congregations in the Aitkin area belonged to the Duluth District. St. Cloud, Brainerd, Little Falls, and Upsala belonged to the St. Paul District. The Duluth pastors asked to be relieved of responsibility for Aitkin County, and in 1897 the Conference authorized the formation of a new district. Since several of the principal towns in the district were on the banks of the Mississippi, it was named the Mississippi District. In 1916 it was changed to the Brainerd District, and six years later it was divided, the St. Cloud District being organized so as to include 11 congregations in the southern part of the old district. In 1939 the two districts were reunited under the name Mille Lacs. The Princeton-Greenbush-Zimmerman parish had belonged to the

Minneapolis District from 1910 until 1931, when it was transferred to the St. Cloud District.

At present the 25 congregations of the Mille Lacs District (in seven counties of central Minnesota) have a total of 4,744 communicant members, and 2,404 children, or a total of 7,148 baptized members. The four urban churches—Brainerd, Crosby, Little Falls, and St. Cloud—constitute more than 40 per cent of the numerical strength of the district.[16]

NOTES

[1] Fredrik Peterson to A. Jackson, Dec. 15, 1896, MS.

[2] Sherman Bohn became pastor of the Isle-Malmo parish after his ordination in 1956.

[3] *After Fifty Years, Commemorating the Founding of the First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Brainerd, Minn.; Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical Reports.

[4] *Fiftieth Anniversary, 1888-1938, Gethsemane Evangelical Lutheran Church in Upsala, Minnesota; Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical reports.

[5] Pine Grove Park, on the west side of the river, in Little Falls preserves a few acres of virgin pine forest.

[6] Johnson, Emeroy, *50th Anniversary, Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Little Falls, Minn.; Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical Reports.

[7] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och Dess Förs. Hist.,* II, 568ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical reports.

[8] Lund, *op. cit.* II, 572f.

[9] Lund, *op. cit.* II, 573f.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical Reports.

[10] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.* II, 577; *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical reports.

[11] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.* II, 579ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical reports.

[12] *Building the Walls of Zion Through Fifty Years of Grace, Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Milaca, Minn., 1893-1943; Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical reports.

[13] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.,* II, 593ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical reports.

[14] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.,* II, 583ff.; 593f.; 598; *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical reports.

[15] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.,* I, 539ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical reports.

[16] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* 1887, 1891, 1897, 1909, 1916, 1931, 1939, 1957.

Chapter IX

Cokato And West

Westward from suburban Lake Minnetonka one enters a region of gently rolling hills, once covered with great oaks and elms, maple, basswood, hickory and ironwood, now all cleared and cultivated except for groves around the farm homes and the villages. Grass-bordered lakes of small and moderate size dot the landscape every few miles. The Crow River—north fork and south fork—usually meanders pleasantly and gracefully past barnyards and villages, but occasionally goes on a rampage and chases the people to higher ground.

To this fertile and attractive region settlers found their way in the territorial days of Minnesota's history. Among these early pioneers were hundreds of Swedish immigrants, and Lutheran churches were established in a number of new settlements. Though suffering a temporary setback because of the Sioux uprising in 1862, this region was populated rapidly, and one of the first railroads in Minnesota—the St. Paul and Pacific, now part of the Great Northern—was built through Wright, Meeker, and Kandiyohi counties in the late sixties of the 19th century.

The railroad company carried on an organized and effective campaign for immigrants, with the pioneer Swede of Vasa, Hans Mattson, as the able director for several years. He wrote pamphlets and newspaper articles, visited cities in America and villages in Sweden, made speeches, and persuaded large numbers of Swedes to come to central Minnesota. There was land for sale all along the railroad. To help the immigrants tide over the period from their arrival until they could settle on their own land, the city of St. Paul, with help from the Chamber of Commerce and from various railroad companies, built an immigrant house to serve as a temporary shelter. Such houses were also established at a few other points along the railroad.[1]

By 1870 the Minnesota Conference had 10 congregations in Wright, Meeker, and Kandiyohi counties, and eight more were added between 1870 and 1875. The main centers of Lutheran settlement were at Cokato, Dassel, Litchfield, Grove City, Atwater, and New London.[2]

In the same general area, just below the Wright County line, was the Götaholm congregation in Carver County (now Trinity, Watertown).

These congregations had a total of 3,316 baptized members in 1875. Mooers Prairie (now Stockholm, Cokato) was the largest, with 676 members. It had been organized in 1866 in a flourishing settlement. When the railroad came through in 1869 a station was built three miles from the Mooers Prairie church, and was named Cokato. Efforts were made to build a church near the station and center the congregations in the village. This was voted down, but the members living in and near Cokato started a new congregation in 1870. The people living north of Cokato also organized as a separate group the same year, the North Crow River congregation. Because of the rapid development of these settlements, the congregations continued to grow. In 1876 the Mooers Prairie people replaced their ten-year-old log church with a large new frame church. By 1880 the membership had increased to 775, and by 1899 had reached the high point of 1,288 baptized members. It was the second largest rural congregation in the Conference, and the fourth largest of all congregations in the Conference. After 1900 there was a gradual decline, as has been true of nearly all open country congregations, but until after 1910 Mooers Prairie was the largest congregation in the western part of the Minnesota Conference. The latest figures (1957) show 612 baptized members.[3]

The pastors who had served Mooers Prairie during the years of rapid growth were J. S. Nelson, 1866-69; J. G. Lagerstrom, 1869-1874; P. A. Cederstam, 1874-1882; Gustaf Peterson, 1882-1890, and C. B. L. Boman, 1891-1905. The longest pastorate has been that of Swan Johnson, who served from 1905 to 1933.

While the Mooers Prairie congregation has gradually declined in number of members, its sons and daughters have helped to establish and to support the work of the church in numerous places throughout the state and the nation. Among the sons of the Mooers Prairie parish have been several prominent pastors of the Augustana Church, including P. J. Eckman, his two sons, F. M. and J. W. Eckman, and Peter Peterson, pastor of First Lutheran Church, St. Paul, 1904-1911, and president of the Illinois Conference, 1919-1939.

In 1932, for the first time, the daughter church in Cokato exceeded the mother in point of membership. The religious conditions in the Cokato community and the significance of the mother-daughter relationship between these two congregations have been described in a history of the Cokato Church, written by Dr. Paul H. Andreen, pastor at Cokato from 1930 to 1946:

"In the religious thought life of the members of the Cokato community three distinct trends were developing and clashing in and about 1870: One was religious and Lutheran; the other was an organized opposition to the Church and to Christianity; the third was a free, emotional expression of religious sentiment.

"The religious life of Cokato was deeply influenced by the Salem Lutheran Church[4] organized in 1866 in what is now Stockholm township. In fact, since 1862 the families that later formed the nucleus of the Stockholm congregation had been conducting cottage prayer meetings, divine services and Bible studies. These families and the Stockholm Church laid the foundation of Lutheran worship in this territory. Staunch defenders of 'the faith once delivered to the saints,' its members and pastors guided the Cokato Church in its beginnings. Without doubt, one of the reasons for the early strength of the Cokato congregation was the counsel given to it by the mother church.

"The organized opposition to Christianity in general, and to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in particular, was short-lived, although intense and vindictive while it lasted. The effects of this controversy can be noted even to this day.

"The anti-Christian school of thought, flourishing in Europe and America at that time, had its representatives also in this region, the most prominent of them being a well educated Swedish school teacher, a follower of Voltaire and Thomas Paine. In his attempt to destroy church work in this and in the surrounding settlements, he published anti-Christian periodicals carrying the titles of 'Rothuggaren' (The Stump-puller); 'Ögonöppnaren' (The Eye-opener); 'Upplysningens Tidevarv' (The Age of Reason); and had them distributed in the farm homes. He delivered speeches against the pastors, the Bible, the Church, and Christianity. One of the older parishioners told the writer of this article: 'I remember how frightened Mother was when these papers were brought to our home. She threw them into the fire. Father took out his Bible and got into an argument with these visitors.' After a few years the public attacks subsided.[5]

"The third trend was a free-lance emotional expression of religion. Not only were the 'Augustana-ites,' as these Lutherans were termed, called upon to maintain the fundamental belief in God in the face of organized attacks by agnostics, but they also had to defend the doctrine of the Church and the teaching of the atonement from attack by the sects. These groups, as a whole, had as their main theses that church organization was an evil; creeds were superfluous; liturgy and decorum in worship dangerous; and that the whole of religious life and all of salvation was to be compressed into one single emotional experience. Basically most of them were 'Perfectionists,' i.e., after this one single emotional experience they were forever without sin."[6]

The struggles and controversies concerning doctrine and church order continued to rage in and around Cokato for a decade. In 1877 L. A. Hocanzon became the pastor. He has been described as "a man of courage, endowed with a keen and active mind, and a powerful preacher." His contemporaries are reported to have said of him, "He brought order out of the disorder found in the Cokato Church," and his opponents stated "that he caused disorder in the small amount of order found in Cokato community."

The first few years of Hocanzon's pastorate were a critical time. In 1880 he reported "sad spiritual conditions, . . . especially among the young people. All too many run to hear sectarian preachers. In our community there is much drunkenness and desecration of the Lord's Day. Almost nothing is given to the Synodical benevolences." It appeared to many that the congregation could not weather the storm, but Hocanzon did not despair. His report in 1881 was quite different from the previous one: "We are happy to state that the conditions in the congregation during the past year have been better than ever before in former years. Many new members have joined the congregation. The attendance at divine services has been excellent. We have enjoyed a rest from spiritual controversies; dues are paid better than ever before; and the Sunday school attendance has increased."[7]

When the storm had abated, the Cokato congregation began to increase in numerical strength. A new church was built in 1887, which in turn was replaced by a new one in 1909. There have been no great fluctuations in membership, but a slow and gradual increase. As the village of Cokato has grown, the congregation has grown proportionately.

The North Crow River congregation, organized in 1870, was united with Cokato as a parish until 1893, and consequently was served by the same pastors until that time: J. G. Lagerstrom, 1870-72; Fredrik Peterson, 1872-1876; L. A. Hocanzon, 1877-1883; John A. Levine, 1883-1893. (Levine continued as pastor at Cokato until 1904.) Though the North Crow River people were subjected to many of the same attacks and religious controversies as those in Cokato, the struggle was less critical, partly because of a deep and lasting spiritual awakening that began in 1876 under Peterson's leadership, and aided with great zeal by a gifted and consecrated woman in the congregation, Mrs. Anna Fredrika Knapp. Her influence was such that the community has ever since been known as the Knapp community.[9]

The little congregation worshipped in its original log church until 1882, when a new frame church was built. A brick church was erected in 1903. The congregation at that time had 356 members. There has been a gradual decline in the past fifty years, and now (1957) the figure is 262.[10]

A group of about a dozen families in the North Crow River congregation were granted permission in 1898 to form a separate congregation. It was organized by Rev. E. Norsen, and was called French Lake Lutheran Church. Its name has been changed to Grace Lutheran, South Haven. It has formed a parish together with North Crow River. Grace congregation now (1957) has 169 baptized members, a gradual decrease having been the trend since 1920.

The Mooers Prairie colony, on the western edge of Wright County, began, early in its history, to spread into adjacent parts of Meeker

County, where the Swedish Lutheran Church of Steelsville was organized in 1873. Four years later the congregation moved a few miles north to Dassel, and was named Gethsemane Lutheran Church. Its first church building was a renovated schoolhouse. A new church was built in 1886. It was rebuilt and enlarged in 1946 and further improved in 1953. The membership has maintained a steady increase and is near the 1,000 mark in 1957. The name was changed to First Lutheran Church in 1927.[11]

Swan Lake Lutheran Church, organized in 1873 by Rev. Fredrik Peterson of Cokato, is located seven miles from Dassel and forms a parish with First. Swan Lake has a membership of 103.

Zion Lutheran Church, Buffalo, had its beginning in 1866 when the Carlslund congregation was organized in the country south of Buffalo. A church was built in the country in 1870, and a new one in 1887. Though the congregation was small, a church was built in Buffalo in 1900, and for more than 30 years the congregation held services in both churches. A new church was built in 1951. The congregation now has 753 members, an increase of about 200 per cent in the past 15 years.[12]

Swedesburg congregation, eight miles from the old Carlslund church, was organized in 1873, and 30 years later had some 200 members. There was a gradual decline until 1950 when the remaining group of some 50 members merged with Zion Church, Buffalo.

A congregation was organized near Howard Lake under peculiar circumstances which reveal the religious feelings prevailing in the seventies. A student, J. G. Sjoquist, who had been denied ordination by the Augustana Synod because he taught doctrines not accepted by the Synod, came to the Howard Lake community and held services in a schoolhouse. A log building was erected to serve as a church, with the implied understanding that it was to be a Lutheran Church, though no congregation had been organized. Preachers of various kinds came and conducted services occasionally. In 1876 Rev. Jonas Alm came to organize a Lutheran congregation, but when he was elected chairman a loud clamor arose from the opposition group. The Lutherans decided to leave and go to a nearby home to continue the meeting. Thus they lost their claim to the building, and built one of their own a mile to the west. Dissension developed in the group that held the original church, and soon a third little church was built a mile to the east. The original church building was abandoned.

The Lutheran congregation was named Nylunda. A brick church was built in 1900, but the congregation has remained small. The membership in 1957 was 42.[13]

The Mount Hermon (originally Hermon) congregation, south of Annandale, was organized in 1881 by J. S. Nilson. Swedes in the area lived in two separate colonies—Middleville and Albion—with German settlers in between the two. Though forming one congregation they built two churches. In recent years the wall of separation has been broken down. The congregation formed a parish with Swedesburg and Nylunda for 14 years, and was served by J. S. Nilson.[14]

A congregation was organized in Annandale in 1886 by J. A. LeVine of Cokato. It was named St. John's Lutheran Church. Though the church was built in the village, the members lived mainly in the country until recent years. The membership of St. John's in 1957 was 237. Mount Hermon had 117. These two have formed a parish since 1900.[15]

Trinity Lutheran Church, Watertown, is the oldest congregation in the Minnesota Conference next to the thirteen original congregations which were established prior to the organization of the Conference in the fall of 1858. Trinity was organized in December of that year.

Originally called Götaholm, it was located near a lake two miles from Watertown. It had the distinction of including among its members a former member of the riksdag (parliament) of Sweden. He became a successful pioneer farmer in Minnesota and a devoted member of the congregation. The original log church was soon found too small, and a larger church was built in the village. As the community continued to grow a new church was built in 1890. The congregation then numbered more than 500 members.

Rev. John S. Nilson, who served the congregation from 1866 to 1873, had organized the Carlslund congregation (now Zion, Buffalo); the Brush Prairie congregation (dissolved); the Swedesburg congregation at Waverly; the Mooers Prairie congregation (now Stockholm, Cokato); and Mount Hermon, Annandale. At various times from 1866 to 1896 he served almost every congregation in the district.

Rev. Jonas Alm, who was pastor at Watertown from 1875 to 1883, organized Götalund (now Christ Lutheran) Maple Plain; and Nylunda, Howard Lake.

Rev. P. E. Berg, pastor in Watertown from 1896 to 1909, organized the Lyndale congregation in 1898.

The Watertown congregation was not strictly speaking the mother church of all these congregations, but served as a strong missionary base from which to operate in the region to the north and west, as new settlements developed. Watertown also continued to grow, and had 610 members in 1900, and 697 in 1910. The membership in 1957 was 636. The church erected in 1890 was destroyed by fire in 1948, and a new one built in 1949.[16]

On the western edge of Hennepin County, some 25 miles from Minneapolis, rural settlements were developing in the early history of the state. A small Swedish colony was begun at Lyndale in the sixties, and other immigrants settled at Maple Plain. Reference has been made to organizing of congregations in these two places, by Alm at Maple Plain in 1875, and by Berg at Lyndale in 1898.

The Maple Plain congregation was strengthened in 1887 by the arrival of the C. J. Anderson family from Goodhue County. Anderson, a brother-in-law of Eric Norelius, was a devoted and able leader in the church.

Originally called the Götalund congregation, it adopted the name "Christ Lutheran" in 1925.

Both Maple Plain and Lyndale were served by pastors of neighboring congregations and by theological students until 1914 when the two were united as a parish with Rev. Rudolph Peterson serving as the first resident pastor. The membership of each of the two congregations at that time was less than 100. There was been a gradual but slow growth, and in 1957 Christ Lutheran had 342 members and Lyndale 138.[17]

Kandiyohi and Meeker Counties had been almost depopulated by the Sioux outbreak in 1862. It was in Meeker County the very first bloodshed occurred, the day before the main attack by the Indians at the Lower Agency on the Minnesota River. After the Civil War a new influx of settlers began, and the dispersed communities took on life again. Congregations were reorganized, and new ones organized. In

1875 there were nine Swedish Lutheran congregations in the two counties. The largest of these was the Nest Lake Church at New London, with 252 members. It had been reorganized to continue the former New Sweden parish, which suffered greatly from the massacre and was dispersed. The total membership of the nine congregations was 1,267. They were served by three pastors, Erik Hedeen, J. P. Lundblad, and Peter Dillner. Two of the congregations, Tripolis and Florida, were still worshipping in log churches. The others had frame buildings, except the Litchfield congregation which as yet had no church.

Litchfield and the surrounding area had been for several years a place known for religious dissension, particularly among the Swedes. Baptists, Methodists, Adventists, and Lutherans had competed for the attention of settlers, and no one gained much advantage over the others. J. G. Sjoquist, mentioned previously in this chapter as one whom the Augustana Synod had refused to ordain, worked for a time in Kandiyohi County and succeeded in getting the Florida congregation to withdraw from the Synod.

The radical newspapers published from time to time at Litchfield, Grove City, Glencoe, and elsewhere, further complicated the situation for those who were seeking to build up the Swedish Lutheran Church work.

No new congregations were organized in Kandiyohi and Meeker counties from 1873 until 1891, when the Bethel Lutheran Church of Willmar was established. The village had its beginning when the Great Northern was built in 1869, and when it was incorporated in 1874 the first recorder and the first marshal were Swedes. The churchly interest, however, was lacking, and services held in the eighties by Jonas Alm of Watertown were poorly attended.

Willmar became a division point on the Great Northern and the location of shops. This provided employment for hundreds of laborers, and among those who moved to Willmar were Swedes from the surrounding congregations, Tripolis, Kandiyohi, New London, Lake Lillian, and Svea. Some of these were the charter members of the Bethel congregation. The pastor who led them in the organization meeting was J. A. Frost of Atwater.

A church was built in 1891 at Second Street and Becker Avenue. The congregation increased in membership and in 1920 had 639 baptized members. Plans for a new church were discussed, but the new building did not become a reality until in 1927. The congregation in 1957 had a membership of 1,366, and was the largest in the Conference outside of the Twin Cities and Duluth and Superior.

Soon after the Bethel congregation was founded a young man by the name of Victor E. Lawson moved to Willmar from New London, where he had been publishing the weekly paper. He established the **Willmar Daily Tribune** in 1895 and still, in 1957, at the age of 86 he is the publisher of this paper. He was co-editor of a history of Kandiyohi County in 1905, which won recognition as the most complete county history in America. Interested in politics, he has served in the state senate, and was candidate for the gubernatorial nomination in 1924.

Lawson was born in Paxton, Illinois, at the time when Augustana College and Theological Seminary was there. Deeply devoted to the church, Lawson has taken an interest not only in the Bethel congregation but also in the general work of the church. He has served on a number of boards, including Gustavus Adolphus College and Augustana Book Concern. He has been particularly concerned about the preservation of historical materials relating to the church and the community, and has been active in the work of the Minnesota Historical Society.[18]

Nest Lake, a dozen miles northeast of Willmar, was so named because at the time when settlers first lived in the region an island in the lake was the nesting place of great flocks of birds. In 1866 when the Swedish settlers who had returned to the region after the Sioux massacre reorganized the former parish, they called it the Nest Lake congregation. A log church was built a few miles west of New London. When the congregation, in 1873, after a bitter controversy, sold the church land and built a new church in the village, they still kept the old name, until 1899 when it was changed to Lebanon Lutheran Church. (The original log church was later used as a farm building and the ruins of it were still in evidence until about 1945. Portions of the old materials were used to make a small replica of the building, which is in the museum at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota.)

L. G. Almen, one of the influential leaders in the Minnesota

Conference, was pastor in New London from 1879 to 1893. C. J. Collin, after spending years as pastor and travelling missionary in the Duluth area, served in New London from 1894 to 1904.[19]

That the migration of young folks from country to city is not a new trend is evident in a letter written by Collin in 1901. He had been requested to serve as a travelling missionary in Canada for a month, but he declined, with this explanation: "I cannot hire a man or a maid, since all of them rush away from the country to the city and will not work for an ordinary country parson at reasonable wages. My wife is sick and nervous, especially when she must bear more responsibility and work than she should, as would be the case if I went away for that length of time."

He goes on to express his feelings about some of the other pastors in the Conference in a rather sarcastic vein: "The Board should not use the 'weakest vessels' in the new regions where the Church ought to be favorably represented, but the highly educated, cultured, courteous, stately, and eloquent ministers who are so much admired by our city congregations and the large rural parishes. It might do these brethren good to get a glimpse into the primitive side of Augustana's history. By this I have not intended to criticize the Board, for as far as I know it is composed of old, unsophisticated, experienced 'uncles' who believe God can be served by that which is lowly . . ."[20]

During the week of September 21 to 27, 1902 the congregation entertained a meeting of the Minnesota Conference, a special session called to consider the relations of the conference with the Synod of the Northwest; the establishment of a Deaconess Home at Bethesda Hospital; and the question of relocating Gustavus Adolphus College in the Twin Cities. The College question brought out a much greater attendance than had been anticipated. Governor John Lind was one of the distinguished visitors who spoke on the issue.

The College remained in St. Peter. A Deaconess Home was established in St. Paul. The Synod of the Northwest was not merged with the Minnesota Conference. The story of these important issues is dealt with more fully in other chapters of this volume.

The Lebanon congregation had 375 parishioners in 1900. With minor fluctuations the membership figures remained fairly constant for half a century, increasing in recent years. In 1957 it was 454.[21]

Spicer is a small village on the shore of Green Lake, largest of the many lakes in Kandiyohi County. The Saron (now Sharon) Lutheran Church of Spicer was organized by Rev. A. F. Seastrand of New London in 1906. The two congregations have been united as a parish. The Sharon congregation had 145 members in 1957.[22]

Grove City is in Meeker County, Atwater just across the line in Kandiyohi County. First Lutheran Church of Grove City and Immanuel Lutheran of Atwater both date their origin as of 1868. Though there is some uncertainty about this, it appears that both can claim their origin from the Swede Grove congregation, which had its first recorded meeting on October 2, 1868. This organization was dissolved in 1870, and two congregations were organized, one in Atwater and one in Grove City. The two formed a parish until 1925. At that time the Atwater congregation had 420 members, Grove City had 485. Since that time each has had its own pastor, Arnold G. Nelson serving in Atwater from 1925 to 1947. In Grove City B. G. Holmes served from 1925 to 1929, and Johan Pearson from 1929 to 1950. The membership of Immanuel, Atwater in 1957 was 455, and of First, Grove City, 540.[23]

A section of the Atwater congregation organized as a separate group in 1893 under the leadership of their pastor, J. A. Frost. They adopted the name Emanuel Lutheran Church, Rosendale. Since 1907 this congregation has been in the Beckville parish. The membership in 1957 was 126.[24]

The Beckville community, south of Litchfield, is one of the oldest Swedish settlements in central Minnesota. The Beckville congregation was organized in 1869, and for a time was united with the Atwater parish, later with the Litchfield parish. Since 1907 Beckville, Rosendale, and Cosmos have formed a parish. On Ascension Day in May, 1911 the pastor, J. O. Lundberg, was stricken by a heart attack as he stood at the altar of the Beckville Church to begin the examination of the confirmation class. He died a few moments after he had been carried into the sacristy.

The Salem Church at Cosmos was organized in 1893 by Rev. P. A. Wenner of Beckville.

In 1957 the Beckville congregation had 302 members. Cosmos had 237.[25]

Litchfield was established in 1869 as a station on the Great Northern. Swedish settlers had homesteaded in the community as early as 1856, and occasional services had been conducted by visiting Lutheran pastors. A small group of the Lutherans organized a congregation in 1893, and J. G. Lagerstrom became the first pastor. Other denominations had made more rapid progress in Litchfield. The Swedish Methodists had already built a church, which was rented by the Lutherans for their services for ten years. In 1884 the Lutherans built their own church, under the leadership of L. A. Hocanzon, who was pastor of the congregation from 1883 to 1889. His resignation was due to controversy about enforcing the constitutional ban against lodge members. The upshot of this was an investigation by a Conference committee, and expulsion of the congregation from the Conference at the convention in March, 1891. The Conference then sent Rev. P. A. Wenner to start a new congregation. His tact and zeal served to calm the troubled situation, and the congregation was readmitted into the Conference at a special convention in June, 1891. However, the controversy had resulted in the establishment of a Swedish Episcopal Church in Litchfield.

The First Lutheran Church has had a gradual growth throughout its history, and since 1930 has doubled in membership. In 1957 there were 848 baptized members, and the congregation is in process of building a new church.[26]

While P. A. Wenner was pastor in Litchfield he organized a new congregation some ten miles to the northwest. Since most of the members had come from Ostmark parish in Vermland, Sweden, they gave that name to their congregation. Since 1905 it has been united with Litchfield as a parish. In 1957 the membership was 299.[27]

The Svea congregation, ten miles south of Willmar, organized in 1870, was served by Peter Beckman until 1877. J. O. Lundberg was pastor of Svea from 1888 to 1910. At various times it has had parish affiliation with other congregations in the district, but has had its own pastor since 1907. The membership of Svea in 1957 was 578.[28]

Tripolis congregation, organized in 1868, and its daughter church, Ebenezer, Kandiyohi, organized in 1910 by B. E. Walters, pastor at Tripolis, have formed a parish together. The Tripolis congregation has declined in membership in recent years, and the Kandiyohi congregation has gained in the meantime. In 1911 Tripolis had 412 members and Ebenezer 148. In 1957 Tripolis had 313 and Ebenezer 258.[29]

Tripolis was the home base of Peter Beckman and Louis Johnson, pioneer missionaries in west central Minnesota. During the years 1869 to 1876 Beckman lived on his own homestead, and while serving the Tripolis congregation he made extensive journeys in Kandiyohi County and regions farther west. Then he moved to Murdock, in Swift County, and continued his missionary labors until 1902. The following congregations were organized under his leadership: Atwater, Grove City, Beckville, Svea, Lake Lillian, Sacred Heart, Strombeck (near Montevideo), Murdock, Louriston, and Starbuck. He retired at the age of 80 and moved to Idaho.

Louis Johnson had come to Tripolis as a homesteader in the sixties and became a charter member of the congregation. As a deacon he preached occasionally, and Beckman found in him a capable and willing assistant, not only in Tripolis but in the neighboring settlements. Johnson was ordained in 1879, and gave years of service as a pastor in the Red River Valley.

In Lake Lillian township, near the southeast corner of Kandiyohi County, Beckman and Johnson organized the Christine congregation in 1875. A log church, built in 1878, was lost in a prairie fire before it was completed. No new church was built until 1889. The congregation remained small and was served by neighboring pastors until 1916. The membership has nearly doubled in the past 20 years, and in 1957 was 561. The name of the congregation was changed to First Lutheran Church of Lake Lillian in 1925.[30]

Mamre township in western Kandiyohi County had no settlers prior to the Sioux outbreak. After 1866 the region was settled rapidly. The first settler, John Rodman, gave the name Mamre to a lake near his new home. Unlike the Biblical Mamre (Genesis 18:1), the western part of Kandiyohi County had few trees. Most of the pioneers lived in sod huts. There was a grove a few miles from the lake, and there the Mamrelund Church was built. (Lund in Swedish means grove, and Lundblad was the pastor who organized the congregation in 1869.) The village of Pennock was established on the railroad four miles south of the church, and in 1902 the Mamrelund congregation started a Sunday school in the village. A church was built in 1915, and gradually the work was centered there, while services in the country church were discontinued. Membership in 1957 was 298.[31]

In Kandiyohi County no church denomination has greater numerical strength than Augustana. Of the 17,616 church members, approximately one-fourth belong to the nine Augustana congregations in the county. Second highest is the Evangelical Lutheran Church. There are four other counties in Minnesota in which the Augustana Church is the strongest numerically: Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, and Kittson.[32]

Beckman moved to Murdock in Swift County in 1876, where he had organized the Bethesda congregation two years previously. He continued to serve this small congregation until 1888 and also from 1893 to 1896, while ministering to scattered groups of settlers living in their sod huts or dugouts on the prairies to the southwest and northwest. He had organized Trinity congregation in Benson in 1874, and gave them occasional services. In 1877 he organized Bethany, Starbuck, and in 1879 Zion, Louriston. Besides his faithful assistant, Louis Johnson, who worked in the same regions, Beckman had some helpers who proved less faithful. A. Sundberg and John P. Grubb, assigned to work with Beckman, embraced the doctrines of Waldenstrom and organized Mission Covenant churches, sometimes causing serious rifts in the ranks of the congregations served by Beckman. This happened at Benson, at Murdock, and at Starbuck. J. G. Sjoquist, who had persuaded the Lake Florida congregation to leave the Augustana Synod, was instrumental in starting a Mission Covenant Church in Mamre township.[33]

The Fridhem congregation in Murdock was organized in 1903 by Rev. J. W. Lundgren, pastor of the Benson-Murdock-Starbuck parish. The four congregations were at times served by one pastor until 1939, when Benson-Starbuck became one parish, and the two Murdock congregations one parish. The Fridhem congregation changed its name to Calvary in 1941.

Trinity, Benson, has doubled in membership since 1933, and now (1957) has 325 members. Both congregations at Murdock have grown in the same proportion. Calvary had 224 members, and Bethesda 177 in 1957. The congregation at Starbuck has dwindled to 22 members.[34]

South of Hector the Swedlanda congregation had been organized in 1874 and reorganized 1878. Rev. J. O. Lundberg of Svea organized a congregation in the village of Hector and one in Olivia in 1890. J. G. Kallberg served as pastor of the Hector congregation from 1892 to 1921, and a large part of that time he also served Swedlanda and Olivia.

The Swedlanda congregation had a slow but gradual increase of membership until 1920 when it had 322 members. Since that time there has been little change in the figures. First Lutheran, Hector, had reached a membership figure of 500 in 1945, and has maintained its gradual growth in recent years, having 551 members in 1957. First Lutheran Church, Olivia, formed a part of the Hector parish until 1949 when the first resident pastor took charge. Since that time the membership has doubled, from 219 to 435.

Swedlanda was originally in the Minnesota Valley District, until 1888 when the Big Stone District was formed. Hector and Olivia belonged to Big Stone until 1927 when they were transferred to the Wilmar District.[35]

"The congregations situated along the first division of the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad" were made to constitute the Pacific District in 1870, when the original districts of the Minnesota Conference were established. This description included twelve congregations, all the way from Watertown in Carver County to Oscar Lake in Douglas County. Most of the churches were in the rural regions, some of them miles from the railroad.

By 1907 the Pacific District had 35 congregations, extending from Maple Plain and Lyndale in Hennepin County to Starbuck in Pope County. The district was then divided, the Cokato District to include the congregations as far west as to Dassel, and the Willmar District the congregations from Litchfield west. In the Willmar District no new congregation has been organized since 1910. Only two congregations have been organized in the Cokato District since that time, Trinity at Monticello in 1947 and All Saints at Darwin in 1954. In Monticello a congregation was organized by P. A. Wenner in 1873, but it never had more than a handful of members, and was dissolved in 1935. The new congregation, organized in 1947, had 275 members in 1957. The newest congregation in the Cokato District, All Saints at Darwin, had 144 members in 1957.[36]

NOTES

[1] Blegen, Theodore C., "Minnesota's Campaign for Immigrants" in *Yearbook of the Swedish Historical Society of America, 1926*, 3ff.

[2] Johnson, Emeroy, *A Church is Planted*, 228, 232, 269ff.

[3] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf., och Dess Förs. Hist.*, II, 779ff; *Aug. Synod Minutes*, Statistical reports for the various years.

[4] Salem Lutheran Church was the name of the Mooers Prairie congregation from 1921 to 1955 when it became Stockholm Lutheran Church.

[5] Ander, O. Fritiof, *The Cultural Heritage of the Swedish Immigrant*, Page 172, gives the following information about *Rothuggaren:* "The Radical. It was published in Litchfield and Grove City, 1880-1886. It was published only for a short time in Grove City in 1881. Paper written in both English and Swedish, became English entirely in Sept. 1885. During 1884 the paper used the subtitle of *Swedish and English anti-monopoly Greenback labor monthly journal.* The word *monthly* dropped soon. Once 'temperance' used instead of '*Greenback.*'" The same source, Page 183, gives this information about *Upplysningens Tidehvarf:* "Philosophical religious paper for the Swedish people in America. Hutchinson, Glencoe, and Grove City, Minn., 1877-1881." The publisher of these papers was a man by the name of Erickson, undoubtedly the same one who is mentioned in *Early Life of Eric Norelius*, 304, as "the notorious Dr. Erickson."

[6] Andreen, Paul H., *Cokato Chronicle, A History of Cokato Evangelical Lutheran Church*, 16ff.

[7] Andreen, Paul H., *op. cit.* 26ff.

8 *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[9] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och Dess Förs. Hist.*, II. 785.

[10] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[11] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[12] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och Dess Förs. Hist.*, II, 765ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes.*

[13] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.* 794ff.

[14] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 798ff.

[15] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 800.

[16] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 756ff.; Johnson, Emeroy, *A Church Is Planted*, 138ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[17] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 848ff.; Lawson, Tew, and Nelson, *Illustrated History of Kandiyohi County, Minnesota.* (St. Paul, 1905)

[19] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 809ff.

[20] C. J. Collin to J. Fremling, Oct., 1901, MS.

[21] Lawson, Victor E. and Eben E., eds., *Eighty-fifth Anniversary Lebanon Lutheran Church, New London, Minn.*, 29; *Minn. Conf. Minutes, 1902.*

[22] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 814ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical Report.

[23] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 823ff.; Lawson, Tew, and Nelson, *op. cit.*, 196; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, statistical reports.

[24] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 843ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[25] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 835ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[26] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 857ff.; *Commemorating the Svenety-fifth Anniversary of the First Lutheran Church, Litchfield, Minnesota, August 28-29, 1948*, 6; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[27] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 862f., *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[28] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 851ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[29] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 817ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[30] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 872; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[31] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 845; Lawson, Tew, and Nelson, *op. cit.*, 302, 308; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[32] *Churches and Church Membership in the United States, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.*, Series C, No. 19 and 20.

[33] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II. 865ff.; Lawson, Tew, and Nelson, *op. cit.*, 309.

[34] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 869; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[35] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 1046ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.

[36] *Minn. Conf. Minutes, 1948*, 71; *1955*, 80; Statistical reports.

Chapter X

The Minnesota Valley Region

The Minnesota River cuts a neat V across the map of southern Minnesota. As early as 1700 French explorers came up the river to the point of the V, where Mankato now is situated. But 150 years went by before white men settled in the valley. When the Sioux tribes had ceded their lands to the United States government in 1851, pioneer settlers began to move westward into a region destined to be one of the best agricultural regions in the world. The first settlements were generally along the river or within a few miles or it.

Among the early settlers in the Minnesota valley were Swedish immigrant families, who learned that good land was available at low prices. In Carver and Nicollet countiecs Swedish colonies developed in the early fifties. Four of the thirteen original congregations of the Minnesota Conference were found in these counties, East Union and West Union in Carver, and First Lutheran and Scandian Grove, St. Peter, in Nicollet. Another of the thirteen congregations was Vista, in Waseca County.

By 1875 East Union had become the fourth largest congregation in the Conference, with 847 members. West Union, with 739, was seventh. In Nicollet County the New Sweden congregation (later named Bernadotte) had grown to a membership of 753 in the first decade of its history. St. Peter had 473, Scandian Grove, 429. Another congregation had been organized in Belgrade township of Nicollet County. Total membership in Carver County was 1,586, in Nicollet County, 1,735. Only Goodhue and Chisago counties had a heavier concentration of Swedish Lutheran church members than Nicollet County in 1875.

The home missionaries of the Minnesota Conference had also ventured out on the prairies farther west and southwest. Clear Lake congregation had been organized in Sibley County; Little Cottonwood (Comfrey) in Brown County; East Sveadahl, West Sveadahl, and Kansas Lake in Watonwan County; Plum Creek (Walnut Grove) in Redwood County; New Prairie (Sacred Heart) in Renville County; Worthington in Nobles County; Sillerud (south of Balaton) in Murray County. The three congregations in Watonwan County were the largest in the southwestern part of the state, but the three together had only 484 members.

The homesteaders were finding fertile soil in the Minnesota Valley and farther southwest. During the Civil War the price of farm products went up, but after 1866 deflation and overproduction led to a decline. Wheat was quoted in New York in 1866 at $2.19, but in 1869 it was down to 94 cents per bushel. In Minnesota, on November 15, 1869, wheat was listed at 57 cents for No. 1, and 52 cents for No. 2.[1]

This situation grew worse in the seventies, because of the financial panic that struck the nation in 1873, bringing disastrous results to banks, business houses, and farmers. And to make matters still worse, the grasshopper plague hit southwestern Minnesota in 1873 and again in 1874, 1875, and 1876. Many settlers suffered incredible hardships.

The "grasshopper invasion" was a major event in Minnesota history, for it had serious effects on the economy of the whole state. According to entomologists, the invaders were not grasshoppers but locusts. They have generally been called "Rocky Mountain locusts." Their migration was like the sudden coming of an immense snow storm. The first swarms to be seen in Minnesota came in June, 1873 from the southwest. The distribution of the swarms was not uniform, and in some places "islands" were left untouched, while the farms all around were literally covered by the insects. Green crops were consumed in a matter of hours, leaving fields and meadows black.

The locusts spread into some 13 counties, doing the greatest damage in Cottonwood, Martin, Watonwan, Brown, and Jackson Counties. Southwestern Dakota and northeastern Iowa also were affected.

Many of the settlers in these counties were pioneers, raising their first or second crop. To have the crop ruined or seriously damaged meant the loss of everything for some of them. The state government investigated the situation and found that at least 600 families in Cottonwood, Jackson, Nobles, Watonwan, and Rock counties would need food and clothing for the winter and seed grain for the next spring. In Murray County 79 families were destitute.

The next year was even worse. Swarms of locusts invaded Blue Earth, Sibley, McLeod, Renville, and Faribault counties. Twenty-eight counties were hard hit and several others suffered less damage. In 1875 the total area affected was smaller, 19 counties being invaded by the locusts, including most of the area damaged in 1873, but also including Blue Earth, Brown, and Nicollet counties. The 1876 invasions extended northward into the Red River valley, and east of the Mississippi River in Benton and Sherburne counties.

Though the situation was becoming alarming, and the state legislature appealed to the federal government for financial assistance, Congress dismissed it as a matter for state action. Various methods were invented and used to destroy the locusts, generally with little success. In the spring of 1877 a day of prayer was proclaimed in Minnesota, to be observed on April 26. While the efficacy of prayer is difficult to prove from a historical point of view, the fact is that a heavy snowstorm occurred on April 27 and 28, and heavy rains in June. While these did not put an end to the locusts, it was found that these conditions made it easier to destroy them. Later in the summer the swarms of locusts moved out of Minnesota.[2]

A few counties in Minnesota levied taxes to help the people in the devastated areas. Donations were given by many individuals and organizations. Governor John S. Pillsbury himself took an active part in the relief of the sufferers.

Among those who suffered loss were many of the members of Swedish Lutheran congregations in the devastated counties. The Minnesota Conference took action by establishing a committee to handle donations and use them where they were most needed.

At a Conference meeting in February, 1875 the president, Peter Sjöblom, reported that he had published in "Hemlandet" an appeal for gifts to aid the distressed Swedish settlers in southwestern Minnesota.

The railroads had agreed to transport food products and clothes free of charge to the distressed areas. Settlers in the vicinity of St. James had sent a letter of thanks for aid received.

A committee was elected to audit the reports of aid given and to ascertain where further assistance was needed. The committee reported that the following congregations had received aid: Kansas Lake, $530.50; East Sveadahl, $442.50; West Sveadahl, $438.35; Little Cottonwood, $90.90; New Sweden, $130.00; Plum Creek (8 families), $50.00. Further aid was needed as follows: At Kansas Lake, 40 families; East Sveadahl, 50 families; West Sveadahl, 35 families; New Sweden, 40 families; Little Cottonwood, 30 families. Rev. Jonas Auslund, Mr. Johan Johanson, and Mr. Martin Nilson, all of St. Paul, were elected to have charge of the relief fund until the next Conference meeting.

In May, 1875 the committee reported the receipt of $452.18 in cash plus 21 sacks of flour. The flour had been donated by the members of the Elim congregation, Scandia. Distribution had been made so that settlers around Windom had received $60.00 and 12 sacks of flour; Detroit in Becker County, $35.00; St. James, $52.00. There was $305.18 on hand. The committee was asked to continue its work.

At the next meeting in September, 1875 only $30.07 in additional donations had been received. West Sveadahl had received aid in the amount of $41.75. In February, 1876 the committee reported that $50.00 had been sent to Plum Creek congregation at Walnut Station. No request for aid had come from any other place.

The Vasa congregation sent $42.58 and West Union $83.00 before the June meeting in 1876. No more aid had been given since February. At the meeting in February, 1877 the committee reported a few additional contributions: Vasa, $15.00; Red Wing, $64.87; St. Peter, $14.42. Total on hand, $219.87. The committee was instructed to contact the governor, if it seemed to be advisable, with regard to the distribution of aid. Conference delegates from devastated areas were invited to make their needs known to the committee.

At the Conference meeting in May, 1877, the committee listed the following additional contributions: Vasa, $11.15; Swede Grove, $10.75; Atwater, $18.75; Mr. Moller, Minneapolis, $5.00; Swedesburg, $8.63; Sabylund, Wis., $130.65; East Union, $15.00; Spring Garden, $85.00; Taylors Falls, $17.35; Bethesda, $6.50; Balsam Lake, $9.15; Cannon

Falls, $25.82; Carlslund, $9.00; Fish Lake, $4.64; Spring Lake, $3.17; Chisago Lake, $25.55; Chisago Lake, food products, $119.31; Chisago City, $4.75; Chisago City, food products, $25.00; Sabylund, $1.00; Little Plum, $3.27; St. Peter, $11.00; Cambridge, $95.26; total, $865.57.

Aid had been sent to Rev. H. P. Quist at East and West Sveadahl and Kansas Lake in the amount of $667.99, for distribution in his congregations; and to a few other recipients in a total amount of $132.75. The two laymen on the committee were discharged from further duty, and J. A. Johanson and T. G. Haggquist of Minneapolis were elected.

At the May meeting in 1877 the committee reported that 170 families were in need of immediate aid: At Parkers Prairie, 12; Bethany (Starbuck), 4; Bethesda (Murdock), 11; Mamrelund (Pennock), 27; Florida (Kandiyohi County), 5; Nest Lake (New London), 7; Genesee (Atwater), 20; Swede Grove (Grove City), 2; Beckville, 3; Tripolis, 20; Svea, 19; Eagle Lake, 21; Christine Lake, 18; Swedlanda (Renville County), 4. Though no specific reports had been received the committee stated that there would undoubtedly be needy families at Norunga (Kensington), Clear Lake (Gibbon), and in the southwestern district. Congregations in areas where the grasshoppers had not caused damage were urged to contribute to the relief fund.

At the February meeting in 1878 the committee reported that $812.19 had been contributed since the previous meeting, besides three boxes of clothing "from the east" valued at $100. A total of $899.65 had been distributed. A new committee was elected, consisting of Rev. A. P. Monten, Mr. John Bodin and Mr. N. Soderberg of St. Paul. Those who were "in actual need" were asked to apply to Monten for aid.

The new committee reported in May, 1878 that donations totalling $436.43 had been received, more than enough to take care of all requests for aid, without any published appeals having been made. The committee was asked to continue its work, and the following resolution was adopted: Whereas the Conference has been accused of neglect in regard to aid for the needy among our countrymen in the West, the Conference hereby declares that such accusations are unfounded, since, contrary to what has in some places been depicted, the need has not been so great, which has been verified by delegates and pastors from the needy districts, and also because every request for help which has been recommended by accredited persons has been granted. Furthermore, the relief fund committee has been in existence for several years and its purpose and activities have been sufficiently known through the Conference minutes and announcements in the papers.

The final report of the relief fund committee was presented to the Conference in October, 1878. Receipts since the previous meeting were $464.49; aid given totalled $145.00; the balance of $319.49 was turned over to Vasa Children's Home.[3]

Thus a total of approximately $4,000 was contributed and sent to aid the Swedish settlers who had suffered from the locust invasion. Congregations in the needy areas were contributing nothing to Conference missions and institutions for several years. In 1877 the Conference reported to the Synod that one-third of the congregations not only had been unable to contribute anything to the general work, but had needed mission aid to support their own church work. The Synod urged all congregations to contribute to the relief fund, and some responded to this appeal.[4]

Severe as the farmers' plight was where the locusts robbed them of their crops several years in succession, this was not the only hazard that made life difficult to the point of despair. Chinch bugs plagued the farmers during the same years. Prairie fires raged in some areas. The blizzard of 1873 took many lives, and many farmers lost livestock. Transportation was impeded. The winter of 1880-1881 was extremely long and severe. Some towns in southwestern Minnesota were without communications from January until April, as snow buried the railroad tracks. In 1879 tornadoes caused severe damage, destroying both East Sveadahl and West Sveadahl churches.[5]

Saddest of all were the occasional epidemics of diphtheria and smallpox that struck in various places. A newspaper report in the summer of 1880 stated that "New Sweden and Bernadotte are now completely free from diphtheria, which has been raging for a long time in these townships [of Nicollet County]. Ole O. Norman from Norseland has lost five children in one week from diphtheria and Charles Menk in New Sweden has lost seven children." The claim that the epidemic had ended was made too soon. The next issue of the same paper reported the death of 13 other children in three families in the same community.[6]

Christmas was not always merry. Diphtheria invaded the home of a family in the Scandian Grove congregation, Mrs. Malena Benson and her nine children, a week before Christmas, 1880. On December 20, 11-year-old Hilda died. The next day Gustaf, 6 years old, became the second victim. The baby, two-and-a-half-year-old Peter, died on the 23rd. On Christmas Eve, Anna, twelve years old, succumbed, and on the 28th Anton, 15 years old, became the fifth victim of the terrible scourge. The mother was the widow of Peter Benson, first Swedish farmer in Nicollet County. One of the surviving children was eight-year-old Henry, well known to many in Minnesota and elsewhere in later years, as state senator, attorney general, for 42 years a member of the Board of Trustees of Gustavus Adolphus College, first president of the Augustana Brotherhood, still (in 1957) active as a practicing attorney in St. Peter. In the Scandian Grove congregation 20 children died in 1880 and 1881, 18 of these from diphtheria. During the period 1869 to 1881 there were 52 children who died of various causes. By way of contrast it may be noted that in the 25 years from 1932 to 1956 only eight children died, and six of these were infants a few days old.[7]

But while disease and death ravaged the homes of some, there were others who labored and planned and made "progress." Farms and farming methods were being improved, as indicated by a letter from a correspondent to a Swedish paper: "The St. Cloud, Mankato, and Austin Railroad, talked of for twenty years, seems to be on the way to be built. It is to be ready for traffic by December 15, 1884. . . . The Town of New Sweden has been urged to give bonds and presumably the town will vote $5,000 in bonds if the railroad will promise to build a station in about the center of the township. . . . We now have creameries in all four directions, none over 14 or 15 miles away . . . But who is going to milk cows when the farmers' sons go to college and to the city?"[8]

Religious conditions varied greatly from one place to another. While some congregations flourished and gave evidence of spiritual strength, others had a continual struggle as to church discipline, debts, and dissension. One pastor, writing to the Conference president pleading for a recommendation to another parish, described his heavy schedule of work, and the ungodliness that prevailed: On Sundays he had Sunday school and services in two places, with no opportunity to eat from morning until 5 P.M. Every fifth Sunday he visited a congregation 30 miles away. In winter it was to risk his life to make that trip with horses. "Another reason why I feel compelled to leave is the coarse and ungodly life in one congregation, both among the young and the old. The old people are deeply fallen in drinking and fighting. The young people live in carousing and dancing. . . . Some time ago I went to the homes and talked to some of those who are in sin, and reported it to the Church Council. But the council voted that such visiting should cease, and that each one should be allowed to do as he desires, for otherwise the trustees cannot collect the membership dues. One deacon said he drinks and that that is his business and concerns no one else."[9]

The pastor in a neighboring parish cautiously reported: "Here are not a few who seem seriously to seek the Lord and who confess their fellowship with His little flock; but awakenings in the Rosenian sense have not occurred here since I came. But I dare not say that no one has been awakened by the Lord and come to peace with God."[10]

These two letters are fairly typical of a large number of pastoral reports, not only from the area under consideration in this chapter, but in other parts of the Conference as well.

The pioneer period of home mission activity in the lower Minnesota Valley had passed before the Civil War ended. Since 1858 only one congregation has been organized in Carver County; the Salem Church of Carver was organized in 1891 by some members of East Union. It was merged with East Union in 1953. In Nicollet County only three have been organized since 1866, Belgrade in 1871, merged with Mankato in 1928; First English, now Trinity, St. Peter, in 1892; and First, Lafayette, in 1897.

Trinity, St. Peter, the oldest exclusively "English" congregation in the Conference, owes its origin to the presence of a few non-Swedish members of the faculty at Gustavus Adolphus College. The story of the beginnings of this congregation will be more fully related in a later chapter of this volume, since it constitutes an interesting portion of the language transition in the Conference.[11]

When the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad was built through Sibley County in the early eighties, Swedish settlers from Nicollet and other counties were among the first to move into the newly established communities, particularly Winthrop. The First Lutheran Church was organized in 1884 by Rev. C. M. Ryden of Bernadotte. He organized the Augustana Church of Gibbon in 1899. He had organized the Clear Lake Church south of Gibbon in 1871.[12]

J. G. Lagerstrom of St. Peter organized First Lutheran of LeSueur in 1883. Immanuel Lutheran in Mankato was organized by Svante Anderson in 1887. The congregation was a small and struggling group for several years. One pastor complained that "it feels heavy to work continually with the burden of debt in Mankato," and he was bitter because "such helpless congregations are whipped at the Conference meetings."[13]

First Lutheran Church, St. Peter, had nearly 500 members in 1876, when Gustavus Adophus College was moved to St. Peter. As the college church it gained in numbers and influence, and it took on added responsibilities in seeking to strengthen the institution and to minister to the school family. At the same time it faced the duty of serving its strong rural constituency and of reaching the "downtown" people. A branch Sunday school was maintained in Kasota for many years. The membership of First Lutheran reached 1300 in 1957, the centennial year of the congregation. Eight of the confirmands of First Lutheran have become pastors in the Augustana Church. Twelve men whose families were residents of St. Peter have become pastors, and twenty other pastors of the Augustana Church belonged to First Lutheran while preparing for the ministry. Several others have become foreign missionaries. The longest pastorate has been that of V. H. Hegstrom, who served from 1916 to 1940.[14]

The Immanuel Lutheran Church of Mankato, organized in 1887, adopted the name Grace Lutheran in 1926. Serving as an urban church while still using the Swedish language, it was handicapped by the fact that there were few Swedish rural congregations in the immediate area to serve as "feeders" to Mankato. By 1920 it had reached a membership of 536. Since then it has more than doubled, and in 1957 had 1,185 members. In recent years it has extended a significant ministry to the Mankato Lutheran Home for the Aged, and to Lutheran students at Mankato State College.[15]

South of the western tangent of the Minnesota River, 18 new congregations were organized in the last quarter of the 19th century. These were at scattered points in 10 of the 16 counties in this area. Only nine of these congregations are now in the Minnesota Conference; the other nine have been dissolved, merged, or transferred to another church body.

Nordahl and Providence merged in 1884 to form the Providence Valley congregation, south of Dawson. It is the only Augustana congregation in Lac Qui Parle County. Its membership in 1957 was 408.

A Swedish family moved by covered wagon drawn by oxen from Mankato to Yellow Medicine County in 1871, and started a new frontier settlement. Others followed in the next few years. Rev. Jonas Magny found them on one of his missionary journeys in 1874, and again in 1876, when he organized the Swede Home congregation. The township was later named Swede Prairie. In 1884 the M. & St. L. reached Clarkfield, a few miles from Swede Prairie, and a congregation was organized in the village in 1889 by B. F. Bengtson of Dawson. He also organized the Fridhem congregation a few miles west of Clarkfield. These two were merged in 1936. In 1957 First Lutheran of Clarkfield had 323 members and Swede Home 118.[16]

Plum Creek (often spelled Ploom Creek in Conference reports) was the name of a congregation in the southwest corner of Redwood County, organized by the pioneer home missionary, Peter Carlson, in 1872. Most of the members had migrated from Carlson's parish in Carver County. A reorganization took place in 1878, under the leadership of J. G. Lagerstrom and H. P. Quist, and it became the Swedish Lutheran Church of Walnut Grove. The name Trinity was adopted in 1922. The congregation has reached the 500 mark in membership. It was the only Augustana congregation in the county until 1911 when the Immanuel congregation was organized at Belview by Rev. S. A. Lindholm of Lafayette. It had a membership of 140 in 1957.[17]

A congregation was organized at Tracy in 1888 by Rev. A. P. Sater. Originally named Herlunda, this congregation adopted the name Immanuel in 1922. It was transferred to the E.L.C. in 1949.[18]

A. P. Sater, pastor at Walnut Grove, organized the Elim congregation in Lincoln County in 1885. Swedish settlers had begun to arrive in the community in 1872. Owing to disagreement as to the location of their church, two small churches were built, a mile apart. For some years services were held alternately in the two buildings. A post office called Idlewild was established in the nineties a few miles from the churches. This was later changed to Ivanhoe. A congregation, Bethany, was organized in the village in 1926. It was merged with Elim in 1940 to form the Elim-Bethany congregation, which in 1957 had a membership of 252.

The Bethany Lutheran Church of Arco was organized by P. A. Mattson in 1927. For a few years Arco and Ivanhoe were joined together as a parish, but since 1950 each has had a resident pastor. The Arco congregation had 325 members in 1957.[19]

The only Augustana congregation in Lyon County is Trinity, Balaton, organized by Rev. Harold Ardahl in 1907. Services had been conducted in the village of Balaton by L. G. Almen, pastor of the Sillerud congregation at Current Lake in Murray County from 1893 to 1906. The two congregations have been united as a parish. Sillerud had a membership of more than 500 in 1900 and remained at about that size for a decade; since then there has been a gradual decline. The Trinity congregation did not reach the 100 mark until in 1949. Since then it has more than doubled in membership.[20]

Besides the Sillerud congregation there is only one Augustana congregation in Murray County, the Lime Lake Church at Avoca. It was organized in 1878 by C. M. Ryden of Bernadotte. The membership in 1957 was 192. The Bethany congregation of Slayton, organized by Sater in 1884, was transferred to the E.L.C. in 1952.[21]

One Augustana congregation has been organized in Cottonwood County, Wadstena at Storden. It was organized in 1887 by Rev. B. S. Nystrom, but never had more than a score of members and was dissolved in 1918. On the line between Cottonwood and Brown counties the First Lutheran (now Faith Lutheran) Church of Comfrey was organized in 1873 by L. A. Hocanzon. At Darfur, in nearby Watonwan County, the Bethlehem congregation was organized in 1914 by Rev. C. W. Samuelson of East Sveadahl. Comfrey and Darfur formed a parish until 1954. In 1957 the Comfrey congregation had 468 members, Darfur 190.[22]

Though Watonwan County settlers were the hardest hit of any in the locust invasions of the seventies, the Augustana congregations in this county made greater progress than in any other county of southwestern Minnesota. After the locust years it almost seemed as if the ground had been cursed, for only weeds would grow on the devastated fields. But Rev. P. J. Eckman, who came to East Sveadahl in 1880, spoke with the voice of experience in agriculture as well as religion. He advised the farmers to plow earlier and deeper, and to keep up their courage. Conditions began to improve, better crops were raised, new churches were built, and the congregations gained more members. Even before 1900 East Sveadahl had more than 500 members, and West Sveadahl nearly 400. Since the World War I era there has been a gradual decline in both. In 1957 East Sveadahl had 408 and West Sveadahl 273. In the meantime the Augustana congregation in St. James, organized in 1884 by P. J. Eckman, has grown to a membership of 790. Eckman began preaching as a layman at Mooers Prairie, where he settled on a homestead soon after his coming to America in 1866. When he was ordained to the ministry in 1880, at the age of 45, his parish consisted of East and West Sveadahl and Kansas Lake. He served East Sveadahl, 1880-1890; West Sveadahl, 1880-1885; Kansas Lake, 1880-1901; Triumph, 1887-1892; St. James, 1884-1889; and Dunnell, 1893-1894. Two of Eckman's sons, Frank and William, became pastors in the Augustana Church. Five other members of East Sveadahl became Augustana pastors: L. H. Beck, N. J. W. Nelson, A. F. Lundquist, J. I. Bergstrand, and Victor Beck.

Dunnell in Martin County had a Swedish colony as early as 1870, but the first congregation, organized in 1871 under the name "Blooming Prairie" was affiliated with the Norwegian Augustana Synod. This group was reorganized by Eckman in 1882 and was then received into the Swedish Augustana Synod. The name was changed to Immanuel in 1906. Two other congregations have been organized in Martin County, East Chain, near Guckeen, in 1886 by Svante Anderson, and First Lutheran, Triumph, in 1887 by Eckman. A congregation organized in Fairmont in 1913 struggled for a few years to maintain regular services. No church was built. The congregation was dissolved in 1924. The Dunnell congregation has had a gradual increase in membership, and in 1957 had 429. East Chain had 238, Triumph, 316.[24]

In Jackson County two congregations have been organized, one at Round Lake in 1891 (dissolved soon afterwards) and one at Lakefield, in 1887, merged with an E.L.C. congregation in 1950. At Worthington in Nobles County, the First Lutheran Church has grown to be the largest congregation of the Minnesota Conference in the southwestern part of the state. The Worthington congregation entertained the Conference convention in 1955, the only time that the Conference has had a convention southwest of Mankato. The congregation had surpassed the 1,000 mark in membership in 1951, and by 1957 had reached 1,189. The Conference has one other congregation in Nobles County, the First Lutheran of Dundee, organized 1885 by S. C. Franzen, and known as the Lund congregation until 1930. Its membership in 1957 was 204.[25]

Near the Iowa border, some 15 miles southwest of Albert Lea, in Freeborn County, a small colony of Swedes settled in the eighties, and here the Zion Lutheran Church of Mansfield was organized in 1893 by Svante Anderson. In recent years usually listed as the Zion congregation of Kiester, it has at times had pastoral services by E.L.C. pastors in Kiester. In 1957 it had 123 members and was united with Vista as a parish.[26]

Svante Anderson organized a congregation in Waseca in 1885. The Swedes were few, and the congregation gained only an insecure foothold. It was united with Vista and Mansfield as a parish for some years. The Waseca congregation was dissolved in 1926.[27]

Judson is a village on the bank of the Minnesota River, ten miles from Mankato. Though largely settled by Welsh people, a few Swedes had built homes there, and Peter Carlson organized a congregation in 1870. This, however, died out some years later. After the Northwestern railroad was built in 1898 the pastors in Mankato visited Judson, and a chapel was built in 1902. The Bethany congregation was organized by O. J. Arthur of Mankato in 1922. It has never had a resident pastor but has been served by neighboring pastors or by professors and students from Gustavus Adolphus College. The membership in 1957 was 119.[28]

New Prague, as the name indicates, was settled by immigrants from Czechoslovakia, and became solidly Roman Catholic. Changing social trends began to break up the solid religious front after World War II. The American Lutheran Church attempted to start a mission in New Prague, but soon left the field. Services were then conducted by Rev. Arnold E. Carlson of the Gustavus Adolphus College faculty, and the Augustana Board of American Missions organized the Holy Trinity congregation in 1949. Church and parsonage were built. Rev. Birt Harris was the first resident pastor. The congregation had 204 members in 1957.[29]

The region north of the Minnesota River, from Renville County to Big Stone Lake and up to the Red River Valley was in the parish that Peter Beckman and Louis Johnson covered in their travels in the seventies and eighties. Eric Norelius and Peter Carlson had also visited the region in 1876. Carlson had visited Sacred Heart as early as 1870 and organized a congregation known at first as New Prairie. The name was changed in 1897 to Ebenezer, Sacred Heart. The membership in 1957 was 164. A few miles farther northwest the Strombeck congregation was organized by Beckman in 1873. Its location was in the country near Montevideo. Salem Lutheran congregation was organized in Montevideo in 1929, and the two formed a parish until 1946, when Strombeck merged with Salem and a new church was built. The congregation had 457 members in 1957.[30]

In Big Stone County, near the western border of the state, Swedish settlers had established a colony about 1870, and Beckman conducted services there in 1871. The Conference requested him or A. G. Linden of Sacred Heart to make further visits. A congregation was organized by Linden in 1881. It was named the Sardis congregation. It was served by Rev. A. Engdahl (father of Mrs. Luther W. Youngdahl) from 1885 to 1890, and from 1895 to 1915. The name was changed to Elim, Clinton, in 1900. The congregation has had a gradual growth throughout its history and in 1957 had 484 members.

Beckman also visited Ortonville and held occasional services in the frontier village, and a congregation was organized in 1886 under the leadership of L. G. Almen. The membership in 1957 was 305. At Odessa, a few miles from Ortonville, J. O. Cavallin organized a congregation in 1892. Engdahl had Ortonville and Odessa as part of his parish from 1896 to 1917.[31]

A group of Goodhue County farmers, on Minnesota's eastern edge, migrated in the seventies across the state to Traverse County, to raise wheat in the Wheaton region. Rev. A. P. Monten of St. Paul visited the settlement in 1879 and organized the Immanuel congregation of Monson township. For a few years the colony flourished and the congregation soon numbered 200 members. In a wave of booming land prices most of the Swedes sold their farms and moved away. The congregation gradually dwindled in numbers, and was dissolved in 1955.

The Gustavus Adolphus congregation was organized in the village of Wheaton in 1883 by Rev. J. O. Lundberg of Herman. It experienced a gradual growth and in 1957 had 358 members.[32]

The Minnesota Valley District, one of the four original districts established by the Conference in 1870, came to include all the congregations in the southwestern part of the state, from Carver to Worthington, and from Hector and Olivia to the Iowa line. In 1890 it was divided into the North Minnesota Valley and the South Minnesota Valley districts. The division was logical, but the names were less so, for some of the congregations in the North Valley were south of congregations in the South Valley district. In 1909 the latter was named the St. James District, and included the congregations in Brown, Watonwan, Martin, Jackson, Nobles, Cottonwood, Murray, Redwood, Lyon, and Lincoln Counties.

The North Minnesota Valley District was named the St. Peter District in 1908. It was divided in 1925, when the Winthrop district was formed to include the congregations along the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad, from Bernadotte and Winthrop to LaBolt in South Dakota. In 1940 at the request of the Winthrop District, at was dissolved, the eastern end joining the St. Peter District, and the western end forming the Montevideo District.

The St. James District was divided in 1929, with the Worthington District being established to include the congregations in Nobles, Jackson, Murray, Lincoln, and Lyon counties. The Worthington District was abolished in 1946, with part of it going to the Montevideo District and part of it to the St. James District.

The Big Stone District was estabished in 1888, "to include Sater's, Engdahl's, Linden's, and Bengtson's parishes, and Immanuel in Traverse County, and also the congregations along the Fargo Southern Railroad." This included the congregations in Lincoln, Murray, Yellow Medicine, Chippewa, Traverse, Big Stone, and Lac Qui Parle Counties, and several counties in northeastern South Dakota. The following year the parishes in Murray and Lincoln counties were returned to the Minnesota Valley District. When the Winthrop District was formed it took a large part of the Big Stone District. When the Winthrop District was dissolved, the South Dakota congregations went back to the Big Stone District.[33]

NOTES

[1] Jarchow, Merrill E., *The Earth Brought Forth*, 17.
[2] Folwell, W. W., *A History of Minnesota*, III, 93ff.
[3] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, mimeo edition, 103, 105, 111, 114, 117, 123, 132, 137, 144, 153, 157, 165, 172.
[4] *Aug. Synod. Protokoll, 1877*, 44f, 47; *1878*, 44.
[5] Jarchow, Merrill, *op. cit.*, 31; *Minnesota Stats-Tidning*, April 21, 1881; *Minnes-Album Utgifvet af Svenska Lutherska* Öst-Sveadahls-*Församlingen*, 11.
[6] *Minnesota Stats-Tidning*, July 8 and 15, 1880.
[7] Compiled from the manuscript records of Scandian Grove Lutheran Church, St. Peter, Minn.
[8] *"Farmare"* in *Skaffaren och Minnesota Stats Tidning*, March 21, 1883.
[9] P. E. Fredlund to J. Fremling, Nov. 11, 1901 MS.
[10] L. G. Almen to P. Sjöblom, March 30, 1901, MS.
[11] See Chapter ....
[12] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och Dess Förs. Hist.*, II ,725ff, 741f.
[13] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 706f, 714f; A. E. Ericson to J. Fremling, April 19, 1900 MS.
[14] *First Lutheran Church, St. Peter, Minnesota*, 1857-1957, 58f.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.
[15] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 706ff; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.
[16] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 730ff, 746ff; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.
[17] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 968f, 752f.
[18] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 970f; *Minn. Conf. Minnutes*, 1949, 48.
[19] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 988ff; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.
[20] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 971ff; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.
[21] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 982ff; *Minn. Conf. Minutes, 1952*, 53.
[22] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 975ff.
[23] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 943ff; *Minnes-Album Utgifvet af Svenska Lutherska Öst-Sveadahl's Församlingen*, 13,29.
[24] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 955ff; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.
[25] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 979ff; 984; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.
[26] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 704f.
[27] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 704.
[28] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 709; Johnson, Emeroy, *A Church Is Planted*, 257ff.
[29] *A Brief History of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of New Prague, Minnesota* (Mimeographed 1952).
[30] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 1033ff; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.
[31] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 1038ff.
[32] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 1051ff; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical reports.
[33] *Minn. Conf. Minutes* for the respective years.

Chapter XI

The Goodhue Sector

Goodhue County was Indian country until 1851. Boats had been steaming up the Mississippi since 1823, but, except for Fort Snelling and a few trading posts and missions, all the early settlements were east of the Mississippi. When the land west of the river was opened for white settlers, Red Wing was established at a scenic and strategic spot in Goodhue County, at the north end of Lake Pepin, near the spot where the Cannon River flows into the Mississippi. From this debarkation point land-seekers easily found what they were looking for. The frontier period passed quickly in Goodhue County. In less than a decade it was transformed from wilderness to well organized communities.

The northern half of Goodhue County is hilly, cut into valleys by Belle Creek, Hay Creek, and Cannon River. It was not the easiest place for new settlers to begin farming, yet this region was chosen by hundreds of Swedish families who sought homes in the New World. Goodhue County is the only one in southeastern Minnesota with any considerable population of Swedish descent. In 1880 there were 4,559 foreign born Swedes in Goodhue County, more than 15 per cent of the total population. Vasa had already become a symbol of Swedish Lutheran life in America, where Swedish immigrants were making a significant contribution to the civic and religious life.

Hans Mattson, first Swedish farmer in Goodhue County, has given this explanation as to why he chose to settle at Vasa: "We had been told that there were a number of our countrymen at Chisago Lake and a few near Carver, but that all had settled on timber lands. We also learned that near Red Wing, in Goodhue County, places could be found with both timber and prairie, and an abundance of good water. Having looked over the different localities we finally decided on the present town of Vasa, about twelve miles west of Red Wing. The first claims were taken at Belle Creek, south of White Rock, and afterwards others were taken at a spring now known as Willard Spring, near which the large brick church now stands."[1]

Mattson stayed at Vasa only three years, but other Swedes soon settled at Vasa, White Rock, Cannon Falls, and in Red Wing. Lutheran congregations were organized at Vasa and Red Wing in 1855, near Cannon Falls (the Cannon River Church) in 1857, and the Spring Garden Church near White Rock in 1858. The leader in the church work was Eric Norelius, who visited Goodhue County in 1855 and came to live there in 1856. Except for a few short intervals Vasa was his home the rest of his long life. He died in 1916.

Before the end of the decade of the seventies four more congregations were organized in Goodhue County: Zion, Goodhue; St. Ansgar's, Cannon Falls; Welch; and Prairie Island. In 1879 the eight congregations had a total of 4,086 baptized members. No new Swedish Lutheran congregations have been organized in Goodhue County since that time. An English Lutheran congregation organized in Red Wing in 1886 belonged to the Minnesota Conference until 1891, when it withdrew to join the Synod of the Northwest. Zion Church at Goodhue merged with Vasa in 1952.

In the regions adjacent to Goodhue County eight Swedish Lutheran congregations were organized prior to 1880: Lake City, Millville, and Minneiska in Wabasha County; Christdala in Rice County; Stockholm, Sabylund, Little Plum, and Hager City (originally Trenton) in Wisconsin. The only one of any considerable size was Sabylund, with 620 members. The other seven had a total of 700. The only new congregations in the region since 1880 are Tabor, Bay City, Wisconsin, organized 1881; and Hoflanda, in Mower County, organized in 1883, dissolved in 1932.

The Goodhue District was one of the four original districts established by the Conference in 1870. It was somewhat indefinitely bounded as "including the congregations in Goodhue County and down along the Mississippi River." [2]

The boundary was flexible enough to include Hastings, a few miles up the river from Red Wing, in Dakota County, from 1871 to 1904; Eau Claire and Levis, Wisconsin, fifty miles east of the river, from 1883 to 1912. These three were transferred to the St. Paul District. Levis was dissolved in 1948.

Under the leadership of Norelius the congregations in Goodhue County manifested growth and development both in the improvement of their church property and in the stability of the religious life. A large share of Conference leadership came from the Goodhue District. During the first 65 years of the history of the Conference, the president was a pastor in the Goodhue District more than one-half of the time.

Eric Norelius was pastor of the Vasa-Red Wing parish from 1856 to 1858, and from 1861 to 1867. He was a pastor of Vasa from 1869 to 1878, 1886 to 1889, and 1901 to 1905. He organized the Zion congregation at Goodhue, nine miles from Vasa, in 1869 and served as the pastor for 46 years. He served the Spring Garden congregation from 1882 to 1884. He had many contacts with the other parishes in Goodhue County, and in the entire district.

Though Norelius was only 22 when he became pastor of Vasa and Red Wing in 1856, and quite inexperienced in church administration, he soon gained both in age and experience. Having been deeply influenced by the pietistic movement which flourished in Sweden, he had entertained hopes of establishing in America a church of true believers. When he faced the realities of life in a Swedish colony on the frontier, the situation was not quite the same as he had expected. He wrote to T. N. Hasselquist, president of the Synod, asking for advice. Hasselquist admitted it would be "so good and so joyful" to have a congregation of only those who seem to be the objects of God's saving grace. "But soon this everyday life might be such that one would begin to wonder if one might be mistaken about them, then a new picked list, and so it would go all the time, I fear." [3]

So in spite of some misgivings Norelius admitted members to his congregation and sought to build and strengthen the work inwardly and outwardly. He was concerned about church schools for the adults as well as the children. He emphasized churchliness and disapproved sectarianism. He persuaded the congregations both in Vasa and Red Wing to employ teachers for several months of parochial school each year. He himself also taught. Adults met in homes for catechetical instruction in accordance with the old Swedish custom of "husförhör." He conducted prayer meetings and taught the people how to conduct such meetings. Usually the host at the home where the gathering was held would lead the devotions. Some chapters of Scripture were read, also portions from books by Luther, Johan Arndt, and other writers. There would be discussion, prayer, singing of psalms or hymns.[4]

Norelius sought to interest his people in missions and charities. A women's mission society was organized in Red Wing in 1861. Each member gave ten cents per month, and the group soon had 30 participants. In the first year and a half $50.00 was gathered. "Missions" was thought of in a broad sense. In 1862 the society gave $20.00 to needy students at Augustana Seminary, and $10.00 to the salary of the professor.[5]

The Vasa congregation had 346 members in 1867, Red Wing had 171. A new church had been built in Red Wing in 1864, and a new one was built in Vasa in 1869. The Vasa church is still in use. In Red Wing a new one was built in 1895.

The Red Wing congregation became the first home of the Minnesota Conference school founded by Norelius in 1862 in response to personal and official requests. The school had no name the one year that it was in Red Wing. It was moved to East Union in Carver County in 1863, and was named Minnesota Elementary School. This was changed to St. Ansgar's Academy in 1865. Ten years later it was moved to St. Peter and became Gustavus Adolphus College.[6]

Vasa became the home of the first charitable institution in the Augustana Synod, when, in 1865, Norelius established an orphans' home. Norelius had heard of the eleemosynary work done by Lutherans in the eastern states, and he had become personally acquainted with Dr. W. A. Passavant, founder of a hospital in Pittsburgh and an orphanage in Zelienople, Pennsylvania. Passavant had visited Norelius at Vasa in 1856 and they had discussed missions, schools, and charitable enterprises.

In 1862, when the Indians massacred several hundred white people in Minnesota, refugees fled to the cities of eastern Minnesota. Norelius appealed for funds to aid them, and collected more than $700.00. Some refugees were cared for in Red Wing. About $600.00 was used to help the needy, and the balance was designated by the Conference as a fund for a future orphanage in Minnesota.

The need and the opportunity for such a home became evident in the fall of 1865. A Swedish immigrant family, father, mother, and five children, arrived in St. Paul, with intentions to settle in Minnesota. The father became ill and was unable to care for his family. Aid was given by some of the Swedes in St. Paul. The mother was expecting soon to give birth to her sixth child, but on September 17 her youngest, a two-year-old girl died. Ten days later the mother died after being delivered of a stillborn child. Two days later the father also died, leaving four children homeless and destitute. Johan Johanson, a tailor by trade, leading member of First Lutheran Church, part time lay preacher, helper of the distressed, came to their aid. He called an all-Scandinavian meeting and laid the case before this gathering. He was asked to assume the duties of guardianship and was duly and legally appointed. He arranged to place the two oldest children in the Conference school at East Union, and the two youngest ones in a Protestant orphan home which had just been estabished in St. Paul.

When news of this case reached Eric Norelius he felt immediately that this was an opportunity and a call to duty. Without waiting for any action by the Conference, he came to St. Paul in October, and it was agreed that Norelius should take the children. He soon brought the two youngest ones to his home in Red Wing. He took them along to the worship service on Sunday, and the congregation gave an offering to help provide care for them. Norelius asked Brita Nelson, in Stockholm, Wisconsin, to come and care for the children. A home was provided in the basement of the Vasa Church. Thus the Vasa Children's Home was established. Two years prior to this time the Vasa people had given more than $50.00 to a fund for such a home. Other contributions came from various sources, and the work was soon expanded as more children were found who needed a home.

Norelius bought ten acres of land near the Vasa Church, and a small house was built. During the first 11 years of operation the average number of children at the Home was 10. Brita Nelson resigned in 1867. She had endeared herself to the children and the Community, being known to all as Moster Brita (auntie Brita). She served without salary, but she was given a promise that she would be paid when the institution could afford it. This promise was not fulfilled until 12 years after she had resigned from the Home. In 1889 the Conference voted to give her $75.00.

After Brita's resignation in 1867 Carolina Magny of Chisago Lake became the second matron.

Norelius offered the institution to the Conference in 1876 and it was accepted. A board of three members was elected, Norelius being named chairman. Carolina Magny had married M. J. Strandberg, a farmer near Vasa. Now the two were engaged to serve as superintendent and matron, so as to give the older children at the Home a chance to work on the farm. A new and larger home was built, but in 1879 it was destroyed by a tornado. Five children were killed. Six other persons in the community were killed, and there was great loss of buildings and other property.[7]

In June, 1885 the Vasa Home Board reported that 38 children were in the institution. Two had attended Gustavus. English school had been held at the home five months, Swedish school three months.

Serious epidemics struck the Home family and at such times it was usually Vasa and Red Wing people who rendered needed care for small if any remuneration. In 1887, 28 children had diphtheria and one died. In 1889, 20 children were sick with typhoid fever, but all recovered, under the care of Dr. O. Sohlberg of St. Paul, deaconesses Tina Peterson and Gustafva Anderson of Bethesda Hospital, and Miss Hilma Svenson of Red Wing and Miss Emilia Svenson of Vasa. The same year, on January 16, the main building burned. Mr. J. W. Peterson of Vasa solicited $1,300 in Red Wing to help cover the loss. There were 49 children in the Home, and many of them stayed with families in the Vasa congregation until a new Home was built. The farm at this time consisted of 200 acres, of which 80 were under cultivation. There were six horses, 12 cows, three young cattle, one bull, 30 pigs, 150 chickens; the farm produced 452 bushels of wheat, 192 of rye, 864 of oats, 200 of corn, besides some potatoes, vegetables, etc.

The Vasa Home continued to expand. In 1881 the Board was authorized to admit children who had one parent living, and also children born out of wedlock. More land was purchased from time to time, until the farm had some 240 acres. A schoolhouse was built in 1883. J. M. Hyllengren of Vasa was the builder, the cost being $792.92. Mr. O. Sylvan of Rock Island, Illinois, was the first teacher. The Board was authorized to send children to Gustavus Adolphus College and pay for their education. The first one sent—in 1884—was a girl who had suffered permanent injuries in the tornado of 1879.[8] Salaries for the year totalled $1,051.95. When one considers that this was for the care of 40 children amid emergency situations it is obvious that some employees must have received very little if any pay. As yet there was no water piped into the buildings. All water must be carried. There were no washing machines. There was no electricity.[9]

By 1904 there were 73 children in the Home, of whom 41 were boys, 32 girls. For several years the Conference had been considering the matter of placing children for adoption rather than keeping them in the institution for several years. This policy was gradually put into practice, but the Home still continued to care for a large number of children, and in 1926 a large new Home was built in a new location, eight miles from Vasa, on a farm donated by Professor and Mrs. A. P. Anderson of Red Wing. In 1955 the Home became an institution for the care of mentally retarded children, and operates at full capacity caring for 50 to 60 children.[10]

When the Lutheran Minnesota Conference was organized in 1858 three of the five pastors were in Goodhue County, Norelius and J. P. C. Boren serving Vasa and Red Wing, Peter Beckman at Spring Garden. Boren was elected president of the Conference, Norelius secretary. For 20 years the Conference usually met three times each year. From 1878 until 1892 there were usually two meetings each year. In many instances there was a complete change of Conference officers at each convention. The first one to serve several years in succession was Norelius, who served from the fall of 1870 until the spring of 1874.

Altogether Norelius served as Conference president almost ten years, Boren about a year and a half. Peter Sjöblom, while pastor in Red Wing, served five and one-half years. Johannes Fremling, while pastor in Hastings, served three years, and later, while pastor in Vasa, was Conference president four years. Two Norwegian pastors in the Goodhue District in the 1860's, L. Norem and N. Olson, each served a few months as Conference president. When P. A. Mattson was elected Conference president in 1913 he was pastor in Cannon Falls, and continued to serve the parish until 1921 while being re-elected to the Conference position each year. Thus we find that for a total of 33 years the Goodhue District has been the home of the Conference president. For 19 years, 1874-1881 and 1899-1911, Norelius was president of the Synod, making his home at Vasa, and serving one and sometimes two congregations at the same time.

In 1871, for the first time, the Conference established an executive committee. Norelius was the president, and all the other four members were from the Goodhue District: Sjöblom, J. O. Cavallin, pastor at Spring Garden, and two laymen, J. P. Gustafson of Spring Garden, and T. G. Pearson of Vasa. During the first thirty years a majority of the members were from the Goodhue District. The main responsibility of the Committee was to supervise and direct the home mission work in the Conference. Gradually other duties were assigned to the committee.

From the beginning the congregations of the Conference were asked to contribute as they were able to the missions and institutions of the Conference and the Church. No specific plan was adopted. As the scope of the work increased it became apparent to many that some systematic plan was necessary. In 1894 when Norelius was president he urged that the Conference adopt a sort of budget system. The Executive Committee had asked some of the congregations to determine at their annual meetings how much they could contribute to missions and benevolences. A few had responded. These, with a total of 1,800 communicants, had promised $10,474, which was considerably above the average. The Executive Committee had prepared a proposed budget: School, $7,000.00; home missions, $8,000.00; various other missions, $1,800.00; Church Extension Fund, $1,000.00; Synod treasury, $500.00; debt retirement (mission fund), $2,500.00; other items, $200.00; total, $21,000.00.

The Conference adopted a plan with these provisions: Each congregation shall decide how much to give annually. The Conference shall make no other requests, except for Vasa Home and Bethesda

Hospital. The Conference shall appropriate no more than the congregations have promised to pay. The Executive Committee was to be the Finance Committee.[11]

The plan was attempted for a few years, and a special finance committee was elected to try to make it succeed. The response was not sufficient to make the plan workable, and the Conference was soon forced to go deeper into debt. Not until 1925 did the Conference again adopt a budget system.

Norelius was the first "full time" Conference president, a statement which requires some explanation, and some reservations. He served as president 1893 and 1894 on the prevailing basis. At the February meeting in 1895 he made this statement in his annual report to the Conference:

"If it is expected that the Conference president shall exercise any real and effective supervision over the Conference activities, it is absolutely necessary for him to know the field personally. In this connection may I say: In the long run it cannot go well as it is now. It seems that everyone is nearest to himself and acts without regard to his neighbors and the Church in general. Parishes are established and dissolved as they please. Congregations that ought for some time at least to belong together in order to pay the salary of a pastor, separate from one another, call their own pastors, decide on their salaries, and then come to the Conference and ask for aid for the salary, and this without asking the advice of the Conference, or giving the Conference opportunity to say a word about it. Should there not be some authority somewhere, which could at least counsel and guide in these general interests so that a destructive individualism would not endanger everything? This matter could be helped in two ways: Either that the Conference elect a full time president, or that district presidents be given the duty of caring for the general interests in their respective districts."[12]

The Conference responded by stipulating that parish alignments should be recommended by the district, and final approval should be given by the Conference president. Norelius was reelected president, with a salary of $500.00. In 1896 he was again reelected, and the salary increased to $1,000.00, which was then considered to be "full time" salary.

The opinions of Conference pastors and delegates were divided on this issue, and there were some who felt that Norelius was laying plans to make himself permanent president. Cavallin was chairman of the committee on resolutions on the president's report. When the motion was made to pay the president $1,000.00 in salary, only one member of the delegation expressed himself against it. An effort was made to have the president serve on the finance committee as chairman ex officio, but this was defeated. District chairmen were made ex officio members of the committee. It was also decided that they should have the duty of visiting the congregations and the districts were to recommend the amount of aid to be given to missions and weak congregations in the respective districts. There was strong opposition to the plan initiated by the Executive Committee of asking for written reports and petitions from the various congregations that desired aid. The Conference had always exercised the prerogative of hearing direct oral reports, and voting specifically on each item. Norelius was of the opinion that it was impossible to get reliable information and make the right decisions about appropriations in such a manner.[13]

Norelius' tenure as "full time" president lasted only one year. The bugaboo of a "Minnesota bishop" caused a reversal to the old system. Norelius held office one more year under those rules, but in 1897 Johannes Fremling was elected. Not until 1943 was the presidency specifically designated as a full time position, with a four-year term. Emil Swenson, after serving four one-year terms, 1939 to 1943, was elected to his first four-year term in 1943, and later re-elected to two more similar terms. P. A. Mattson gave full time service to the Conference from 1921 until 1939, but the greater portion of his work was to serve as "Field Missionary," somewhat comparable to the present position of Regional Director of American Missions.

Under the leadership of Eric Norelius in the fifties and the sixties, pioneer conditions in Goodhue County had rapidly changed to well ordered communities and congregations. The Vasa congregation, under succeeding pastors, Swärd, Fremling, Modin, and Lindgren, maintained a numerical strength of more than 1,000 members until the World War I era. As in many rural areas of the nation a population decrease began, and the Vasa congregation has declined gradually in the past 40 years, having now (1957) 748 members.[14]

Peter Sjöblom had been ordained to the ministry in Sweden. He was a man of strong and sometimes rigid principles. After a short period of service in Indiana he was called to Red Wing, and served First Lutheran Church 1869-1886. His influential leadership extended beyond the borders of his parish, into the Conference and the Synod. Besides seven years as Conference president, he served several years as vice president of the Synod, and one year as secretary.

He was succeeded in Red Wing by Gustaf Rast, who served from 1887 to 1907; E. G. Chinlund, 1907-1915; E. J. Colberg, 1916-1919; L. B. Benson, 1920-1924. During the first two decades of the 20th century the congregation experienced a decline in membership, but has increased again, and at present (1957) has 1,240 members.[15]

Near the sandstone height called White Rock, southwest of Vasa, Norelius visited a new settlement in 1856, and here the Spring Garden congregation was organized by Peter Beckman two years later. That the name was fitly chosen is evidenced by the fact that as recently as 1930 spring water was piped into the parsonage by means of a hydraulic ram located about one-fourth of a mile away. This equipment was in use until after 1950.[16]

During the pastorate of J. O. Cavallin, 1870-1880, the congregation reached the 500 mark in membership. Unlike the majority of rural congregations, Spring Garden has not declined in membership in recent years, but has grown to a figure of 600 in 1957. Unique in the history of this congregation is the service of J. P. Gustafson as deacon for 69 years, from 1860 to 1929. During pastoral vacancies or on Sundays when the pastor was not at home, Gustafson had charge of the church services. He was one of the two laymen on the first executive committee of the Conference.[17]

Norelius organized the Cannon River congregation, a few miles northwest of Vasa, in 1857. This congregation has always been a small group, worshipping in a rural church about five miles from Cannon Falls. The St. Ansgar's congregation in the village of Cannon Falls is a "daughter" of the Cannon River group. It was organized by Cederstam and Norelius in 1869. Jonas Magny was the pastor from 1871 to

1876, and Aron Wahlin from 1876 to 1887. This was a period of rapid growth in the village, and in 1888 the congregation had 650 members. Except for minor fluctuations it has continued to grow, and at present (1957) has 968.[18]

A few Swedish settlers came to the north central part of Goodhue County in 1858, and more in the sixties. Norelius visited them and held services in the homes and in the Eggleston school house. He organized a congregation in 1873, the Welch Lutheran Church, and served as regular pastor for a year. A church was built a few years later at an elevated site next to the road which became U. S. highway 61, between Hastings and Red Wing. Welch and Hastings formed a parish for a time in the eighties. Since 1895 Welch and Cannon River have been united as a parish, with Prairie Island also included since 1897. The last mentioned congregation was organized in 1876 by Peter Sjöblom of Red Wing. Its location is not actually on an island, but on a narrow strip of land between the Vermilion River and the Mississippi. The place is one of the first spots in Minnesota on which white men erected a structure. The French explorer, LeSueur, built a fort on Prairie Island in 1695, but it was soon abandoned.

The Welch congregation had grown to a membership of 328 in 1900, and the figure has remained fairly constant since that time. The Prairie Island congregation has been small. From a high point of 98 members in 1912 it has declined to 37 in 1957.[19]

L. A. Hocanzon, who later became a pastor and home missionary in the Minnesota Conference, was the lay leader in the organizing of a congregation in Lake City. Sjöblom was asked to come and serve as chairman at the organization meeting in 1869. No regular pastor was secured until 1880, and services were conducted by laymen, Hocanzon being the main leader. The congregation had approximately 250 members by the turn of the century, and remained at about this membership until after World War II. It now (1957) has 425 members.[20]

Sjöblom also organized a congregation at Minneiska, 30 miles down river from Lake City, in 1869 and the same year also at Millville, an inland village 18 miles south of Lake City. This was originally known as Long Creek. Both these congregations have remained small, and are near the vanishing point.[21]

The Christdala congregation at Millersburg, organized in 1877 by Rev. A. Wahlin of Cannon Falls, had a membership of nearly 200 in the early years of the 20th century, but has dwindled down to 27. It is the only Minnesota Conference congregation in Rice County.

In Mower County, 66 miles south of the Christdala Church, a congregation called Hoflanda was organized in 1883. These two formed a parish for a number of years. Hoflanda declined in membership and was dissolved in 1931. It is the only congregation the Conference has had in Mower County.

The Goodhue District has 4,000 of its 5,100 members in Goodhue County. Another 700 are in three Wisconsin congregations on the left bank of the Mississippi: Sabylund, at Stockholm; Svea, Hager City; Tabor, Bay City.

The original congregation at Stockhom was organized by Norelius in 1856. According to later accounts written by Norelius there was no churchly interest among the people at that time. Occasional services were conducted by various pastors and lay preachers. J. P. C. Boren, pastor at Vasa in 1861, reorganized the congregation at Stockholm, and moved there in 1864. He died the following year.

A number of the church members had moved a few miles away from the river, to the "heights." Under the leadership of Norelius the Sabylund congregation was organized by this group in 1868. Fremling became pastor of the new congregation and the old one, but it is recorded that he was at times the target of rotten eggs thrown by his people. In spite of such treatment he remained there from 1871 to 1882. Gradually the religious situation improved. As Sabylund increased in membership, the Stockholm congregation declined, and was dissolved in 1887.

Sabylund had built a church in 1868. A new one was built at a different location in 1894. It was a rapidly growing congregation, with 575 members in 1900. Today (1957) the membership is 402.[22]

Fremling organized the Little Plum congregation, nine miles from Sabylund, in 1873. Although it was in a fairly large Swedish settlement the congregation remained small. It was transferred to the American Lutheran Church in 1957.[23]

Across the Mississippi from Red Wing Swedish immigrants had settled in the sixties and early seventies. Some belonged to First Lutheran Church, but the distance and lack of transportation made it difficult for them to attend services. Sjöblom organized the Svea congregation in 1875, and served as pastor until 1878. During this time a church was built. Originally called Trenton, the place is now Hager City. Jonas Magny, who was pastor of Tabor 1878-1891, organized Tabor, Bay City, in 1881. The two congregations have always constituted a parish. Svea, Hager City, had 215 members, Tabor, Bay City, 65 in 1957.[24]

NOTES

[1] Mattson, Hans, *Reminiscences, The Story of an Emigrant*, 34.
[2] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, September, 1870.
[3] Johnson, Emeroy, *Eric Norelius*, 143.
[4] Norelius to T. N. Hasselquist, Feb. 29, 1864 MS.
[5] Norelius, *Report at Women's Missionary Society*, 1863. MS.
[6] Peterson, Conrad, *A History of Eighty Years*, 1942; *Remember Thy Past*, 1952; Johnson, Emeroy, *Eric Norelius*, 102ff; 182ff.
[7] Johnson, Emeroy, *Eric Norelius*, 131ff, 180f.
[8] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1884, 1885.
[9] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1899.
[10] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1899, 1900, 1926, 1954, 1955.
[11] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1894.
[12] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1895.
[13] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1895, 1896; L. G. Almen to P. Sjöblom, May 23, 1896 MS.
[14] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical Reports.
[15] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical Reports.
[16] *Spring Garden Lutheran Church* (1933) 6f, 30; Personal interviews by the author with Arthur L. Chell, present pastor of Spring Gardens.
[17] *op. cit.*, 16; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Dec. 9, 1871.
[18] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och Dess Förs. Hist.* II, 621ff; 631f.
[19] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 622ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical Reports.
[20] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 633; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical Reports.
[21] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 636ff.
[22] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 644ff.
[23] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 650f; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1957, 67.
[24] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, II, 653ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical Reports.

Chapter XII

St. Paul and Environs

Minnesota was not on the map in 1819 when the United States Army built Fort Snelling at the confluence of the St. Peter's River and the Mississippi. The land west of the Mississippi was in Missouri Territory, on the east in Michigan Territory, but there was in reality no organized government. The soldiers came to establish U. S. sovereignty. Never has a hostile shot been fired at this fort. It became rather a symbol of peaceful civilization. St. Paul was established down river from the fort, Minneapolis up river. At times they contended with bitterness in the race for supremacy. Both grew until they met and they learned to live together as twin cities. St. Paul got the state capitol, Minneapolis the university. Both cities are still growing. St. Paul became the commercial center, Minneapolis the lumber and flour center. Together they have become a metropolitan area of more than a million people, the financial, cultural, and social center of a large region that includes not only Minnesota but also western Wisconsin, North Dakota, and South Dakota, and eastern Montana.

The Twin Cities have become the headquarters of the Lutheran Minnesota Conference and of the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church, as well as of three other Lutheran church bodies, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Synod of the Northwest, and the Lutheran Free Church. Almost forty per cent of the members of the Minnesota Conference live in the Twin Cities, and more than 43 per cent of all church property in the Conference is in these cities.

The oldest congregation of the Conference is in St. Paul—First

Lutheran Church, established in 1854—but the growth of the urban congregations was slow until towards the end of the 19th century. Even until World War I the rural areas were by far the dominant part of the Conference.

Swedish immigrants pouring into Minnesota in a steady stream were intent on getting free homestead land, or buying farms at low prices. Many of them stayed a few weeks or even a few years in the cities, to earn a few dollars, but most of them thought of these jobs as temporary. In 1880, after three decades of immigration, there were only 1,897 Swedish immigrants in St. Paul and 3,188 in Minneapolis. St. Paul had a total population of 41,473 in 1880, Minneapolis had 46,887. Thus the foreign-born Swedes were 4.6 per cent of the population in St. Paul, 6.8 per cent in Minneapolis.

Before 1880 there was only one Augustana congregation in St. Paul, two in Minneapolis. The one in St. Paul had 518 members, the two in Minneapolis had a total of 575 (First Augustana, 500; Bethlehem, 75). Each one had a church building of frame construction. Only First Augustana owned a parsonage.

The trend towards urbanization was about to begin. In the decade of the eighties the number of Swedish-born persons in St. Paul increased sixfold to 11,787, which was 8.8 per cent of the total population. In the same period a similar trend was evident in Minneapolis, when the Swedish foreign-born in 1890 numbered 19,398, or 11.8 per cent of the total population.[1]

The pioneer home missionary, Eric Norelius, on his journey in 1861, had passed through Minneapolis without stopping, "since there were no Swedes." Thirty years later the Augustana pastors still thought of their home mission field as being the Swedish people. Besides the 30,000 foreign born Swedes in the Twin Cities there were thousands of sons and daughters of immigrants, many of them from farms and villages of Minnesota who came to the cities to find jobs as laborers or maids. In general their income was pitifully small, and their living standards were often so low as to border on squalor. Many of them were lost from the church, because of indifference on the part of some, lack of adequate church facilities and manpower, and the temptations of liquor and other sordid pleasures. But there were also many who went to church services as often as they could, contributed what little they could, and remained faithful when earnings increased and the living standards improved. Some became business and professional men, skilled tradesmen and artisans, home owners, substantial citizens, capable laymen in the church.

In St. Paul the Swedish residents lived mostly on the east side. The Phalen Creek area was long known as "Svenska dalen" (Swedish valley). Payne Avenue and the entire Arlington Hill area became a Swedish stronghold. The original church of the First Lutheran congregation was situated at John and Woodward, now John and Thirteenth. For many years this has been an area of warehouses, truck terminals, and lumber yards, but it was a residential section, near the north edge of the city, when the first church was built in 1867.[2]

The church was 28 x 50 feet in size, large enough for the congregation when it was new, but in a few years much too small. Though enlarged in 1872 and again in 1878, it was inadequate for the growing congregation. A new brick church, 85 x 90 feet in size, was built in 1883.

Rev. Jonas Auslund served the St. Paul congregation from 1871 until 1877. He was succeeded by A. P. Monten, who has been characterized as "the sort of pastor whose work shows visibly, a man of projects, an organizer, a pusher . . . kind of like a businessman . . . He could mix sternness with gracious hospitality." He and his wife would invite the confirmation class to their home at 325 Olmstead Street for coffee, and on one occasion they entertained 500 young people at a strawberry and cake social on their lawn.[3]

Monten's period of service came at a time when many Protestant churches emphasized the emotional, revivalistic methods of bringing people to conversion. Monten warned against such methods, relying rather on preaching and balanced instruction. He was strong on church discipline and spoke out on social and moral issues. He served First Lutheran from 1878 to 1886, a time of rapid growth in the city of St. Paul and in the congregation of which he was the pastor. His work as leader of the colonization movement, and his work as pastor in other parts of the Conference, are mentioned elsewhere in this volume.[4]

The tremendous task of serving the Swedish Lutheran people of St. Paul in the 1880's may be imagined from some of the reports of

P. J. Swärd, who was pastor of First Lutheran Church from 1886 to 1894. In 1887 he performed 163 baptisms, and 106 of these were outside the congregation. He officiated at 112 marriages. In the next year 205 children were baptized. He estimated that the church served 2,000 people weekly. Half of the people coming to services were non-members. But some of the outsiders came not to worship. Disorder at the church, rowdyism, and molesting of church people was so bad at times as to necessitate police protection around the church building. Mobility of urban church members is not a modern phenomenon, as witnessed by the fact that Swärd received about 130 new communicant members into the congregation each year, yet the total number increased only about 100 in five years.[5]

L. A. Johnston was the first American-born pastor of First Church. He served two periods, 1894-1904 and again 1911 to 1918. Between these two Johnston terms, Peter Peterson was the pastor.

When the congregation observed its 50th anniversary in 1904 it had reached close to the 1,000 mark in communicant membership, and it has continued to increase, until at present (1957) it has 1,579 communicants and nearly 500 children. During the first decade of the 20th century the residential area around the church was declining, as railroads and industries took more space. Few of the members lived near the church. In September 1917 a headline in a St. Paul paper announced "Church will make way for terminal." The news article went on to say "Friday night the light will shine through the stained-glass windows for the last time when a farewell festival will be conducted." A new church—the present one—had been built at Dayton's Bluff, at Eighth and Maria.

The farewell announced in the paper proved not to be the last service in the old church. It was used until December, 1917. The new one was used on December 23, and it was a joyful day for the congregation. But the joy was mingled with sadness, for Pastor Johnston, gravely ill, was not able to see his new church. He died six months later.

Pastors who have served since then are: George Anderson, Arthur W. Knock, John P. Milton, Paul M. Lindberg, Carl H. Sandgren, William J. Hyllengren, and the present pastor, Ralph Lindquist.[6]

Three pastors of First Lutheran Church have become presidents of the Synod: Norelius, Swärd, and Johnston. Norelius and Swärd also served as Conference presidents. Peterson became president of the Illinois Conference. Two, Milton and Lindberg, became theological professors. Anderson became a foreign missionary and Bible translator. Knock became a Bible Institute teacher, Sandgren director of the Church's department of church architecture and building finance.

While First Lutheran has grown to a membership of over 2,000, it has also promoted extension work which has given rise to daughter churches in several parts of St. Paul. The oldest of these are Gustavus Adolphus and North Emmanuel, both organized when Swärd was pastor at First Church.

When Swedes first settled on Arlington Hill in the early eighties it was an undeveloped area, with a crooked road winding in and out among hills and groves. Few people imagined that it would in a few years become a part of the city. Since the means of transportation to the city were poor, only a few of the settlers on the hill went to church. A survey conducted by First Church deacons in 1885 revealed that of 200 Swedish families in the area, only 27 belonged to the congregation. Efforts were put forth to serve the community, with the Rosen home on Cook Street as a nucleus. A Ladies' Aid Society was begun in 1885, a Sunday school in 1888, which met at first in a hall at 914 Arcade Street. In this hall the Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran congregation was organized in 1889 under the leadership of P. P. Hedenstrom, the assistant pastor in First Church. Forty-three members of First Church became the charter members of the new congregation. A church was built the same year at Sims and Weide Streets. Rev. C. J. Carlson was called as pastor, and he took charge of the work in 1890.

Carlson was 40 years old when he came to G. A. He stayed there until he was 80, and saw the little mission grow to a large and influential city congregation.

The original church was destroyed by fire in January, 1892. The congregation set to work immediately to build a new one, but as it was being completed in the fall of the same year a windstorm twisted it into a hopeless mass of ruins. Though discouraged and heavily in debt, the struggling little group proceeded to build once again. Fellow Christians in the Conference and throughout the Augustana Church sent offerings and gifts to enable the burdened congregation to carry on. In less than a decade the membership had reached the 500 mark, and by 1910 there were more than 1,000. The figure remained at about 1,200 for two decades, after which a new period of growth began. The latest (1957) figures show 2,105 members.

Carlson's forty-year pastorate won him the respect and love of thousands who knew him and heard him speak. He became a patriarchal figure in his parish and among his brethren in the ministry. His rimless black cloth cap was always on his head, giving him a distinctive appearance in any gathering. When he had passed the 70-year mark in age, the congregation called Rev. S. Hjalmar Swanson as associate pastor. Carlson retired in 1929 and was named pastor emeritus, and was given a pension by the congregation he had served for 40 years.

Swanson continued as pastor of the congregation until 1936, and was succeeded by Rev. C. Vernon Swenson, who served until 1948. Constantine Trued was the pastor from 1950 to 1953. Under the present pastor, Leman Olsenius, the congregation has made plans to relocate and built a new church.[7]

First Lutheran Church, in its efforts to serve the area northwest of the capitol, bought lots on Matilda Avenue in 1889 and a chapel was built. Here the Emanuel congregation was organized in 1891, with Rev. J. G. Hultkrans, assistant at First Church, in charge.

In South St. Paul the Bethesda congregation was begun in 1894. Preliminary meetings had been conducted by Swärd. The organization took place under the leadership of Rev. J. A. Frost of Emanuel Church, and the two were united as a parish until 1905.[8]

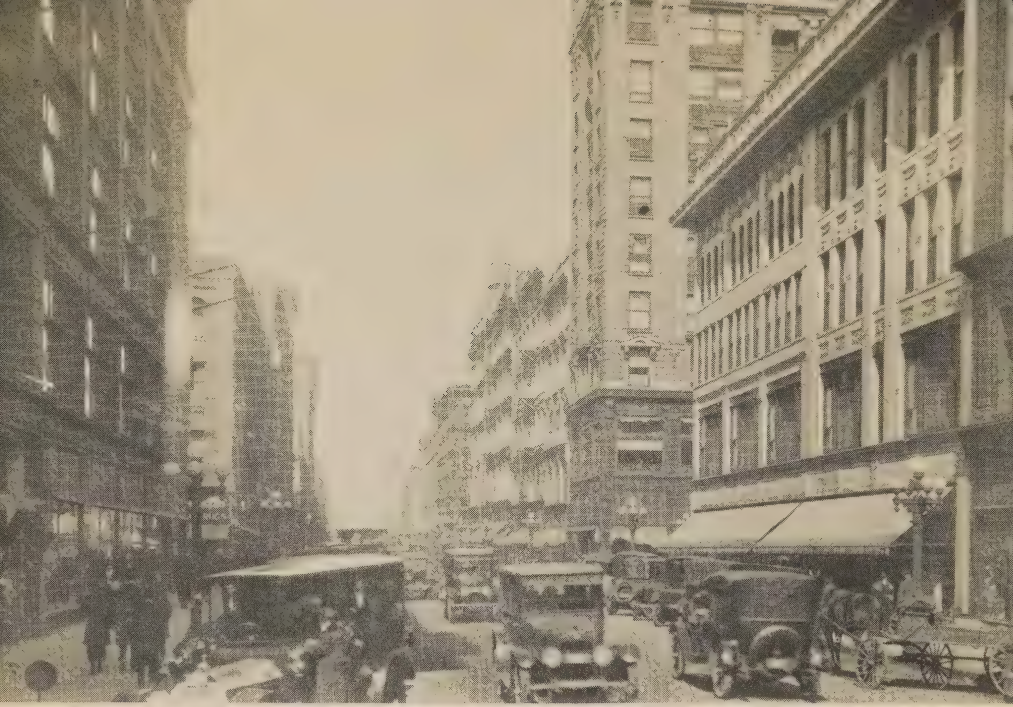
In the part of St. Paul known as the Hamline district, Swedish residents had begun to settle in the eighties. A congregation known as the Merrian Park Church was organized in 1890 by Rev. A. J. Enstam of Bethlehem Church in Minneapolis. It was served by pastors from Minneapolis several years, and later was connected with various St. Paul congregations. In 1913 the name was changed to Zion. A new church had been built the previous year at Lafond and Aldine. The congregation grew from 38 members in 1900 to 1,000 in 1926, and now (1957) has over 1,200. Rev. Arthur E. Olson has been the pastor since 1933.[9]

First Lutheran Church has an old picture of the interior of their original church decorated for Christmas. A banner on the wall says, in English: God Bless our Sunday School. This is evidence that the English language had entered the picture prior to 1883. Some pupils were reading "The Olive Leaf" the following year. There was no preaching in English until the 1890's.[10]

An English Lutheran congregation, Memorial Church, was organized in St. Paul in 1883, and belonged to the Minnesota Conference from 1884 to 1891. When this congregation left Augustana to help organize the Synod of the Northwest, the Augustana congregations felt that there was competition, particularly for the young people. But they were not all eager to forget the Swedish. The Young People's Society of First Church had a discussion in 1908 on "Why the Swedish language will continue to live in our congregation, generation after generation." [11]

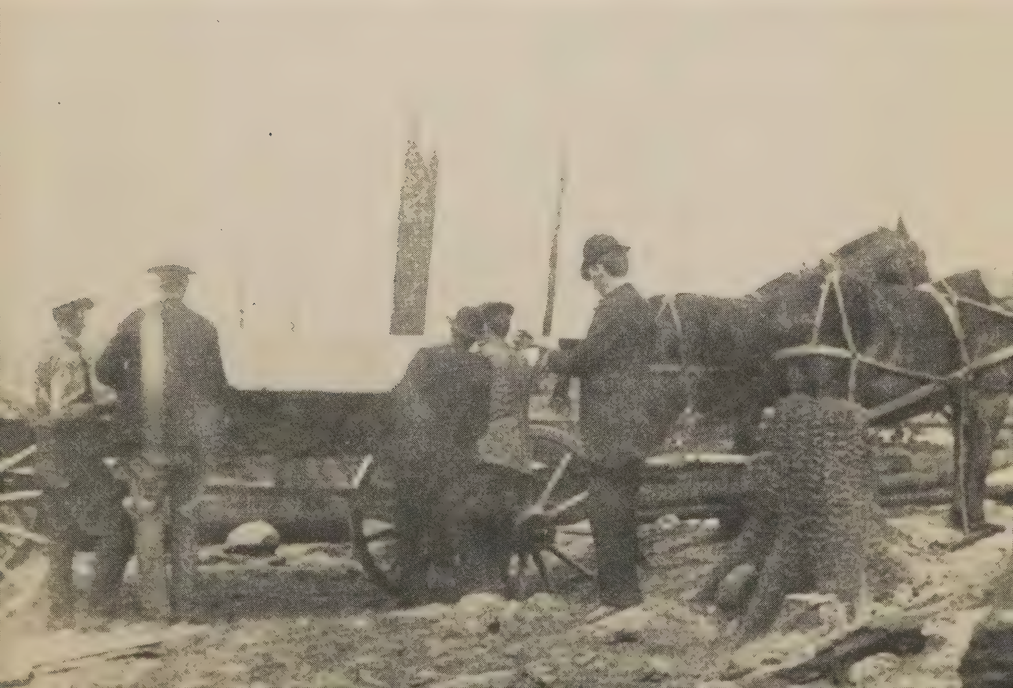
However, in that same year some members of First Church became charter members of Gloria Dei, organized as an all-English Augustana congregation. Sunday school and services had been begun in the St. Anthony Hill District in 1906, and First Church raised money by means of a special subscription in 1907 to buy lots at Victoria and Hague. Rev. C. J. Karl was called for the new mission, and First Church voted to give the property to the new congregation when it had been organized; all members of First Church who desired to join the new congregation were urged to do so; and First Church promised not only moral support, but also permission to subscribe from among its members for a future church building.[12]

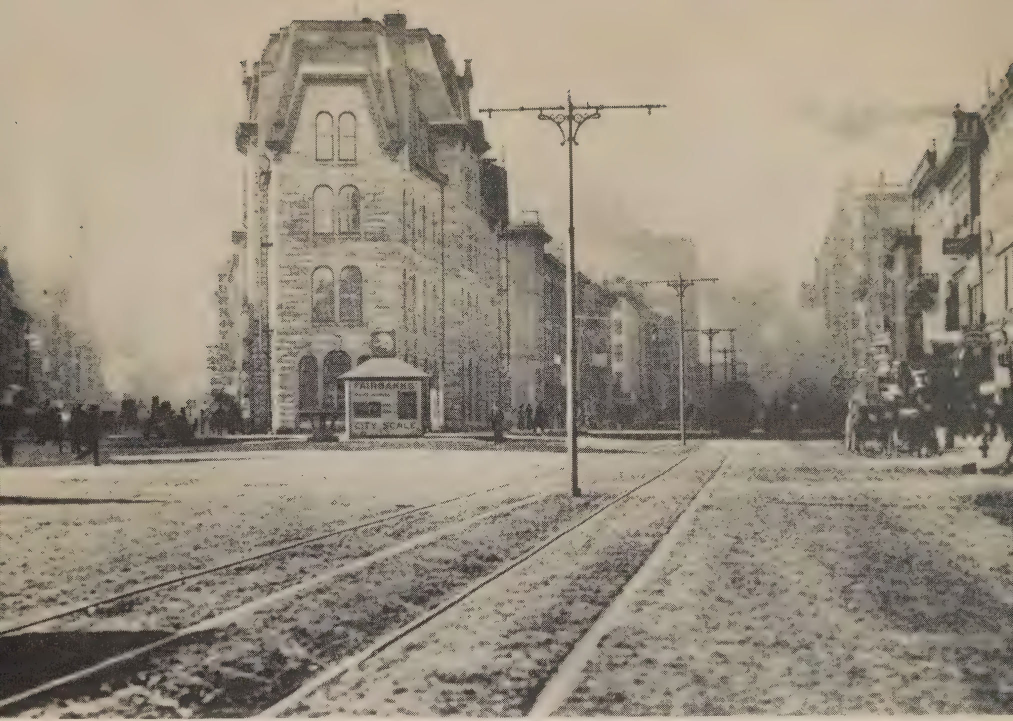
Karl stayed at Gloria Dei only one year. During the pastorate of P. N. Sjogren, 1910-1915, a church was built. There was rapid growth in membership, as the church was in a residence district classed as one of the finest in St. Paul at that time. Roy Thelander was pastor 1915-1920, and was succeeded by Edwin E. Ryden, who served from 1920 to 1935. The church was enlarged in 1921, and the membership continued to increase, reaching the 1,000 mark in 1927. Clifford Ansgar Nelson became the pastor of Gloria Dei in 1935, and soon the question of relocation of the church was being considered. The Highland Park District was being developed into a beautiful residence area, and the congregation secured lots on Snelling Avenue, next to Highland Park. Here a new church was built in 1950, and the same year the



Nicollet Avenue, Minneapolis. Leading Minneapolis retail street looking towards the Great Northern Depot, December 7, 1925. Showing some of the Minneapolis leading retail stores, L. S. Donaldson's store to the right, the Dayton Company store building to the left.

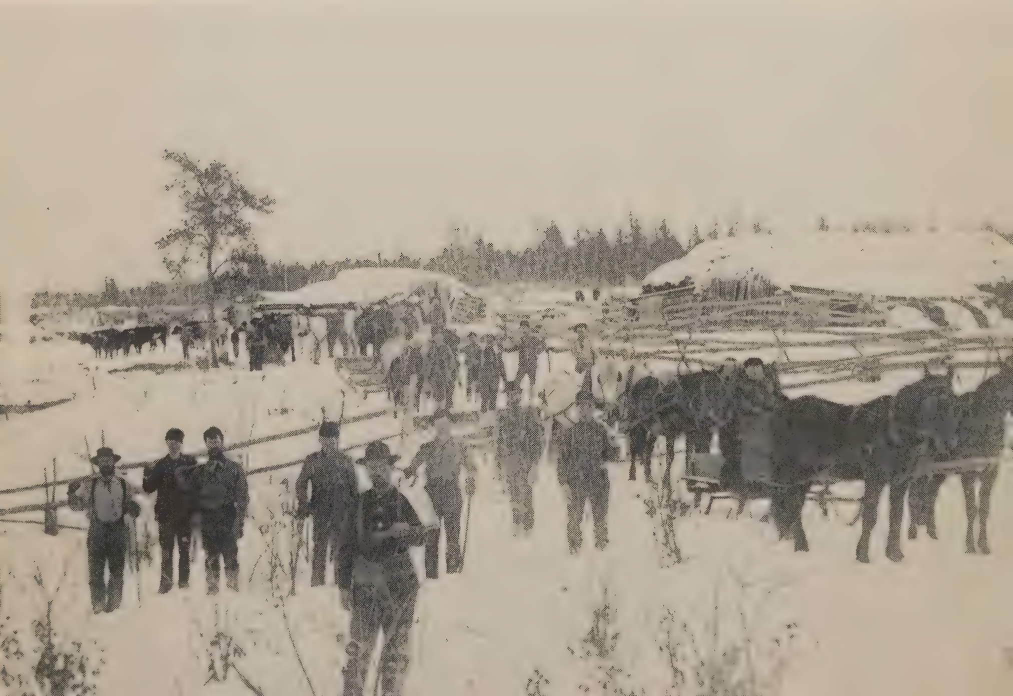
A searching party gathers up remains after the Hinckley fire

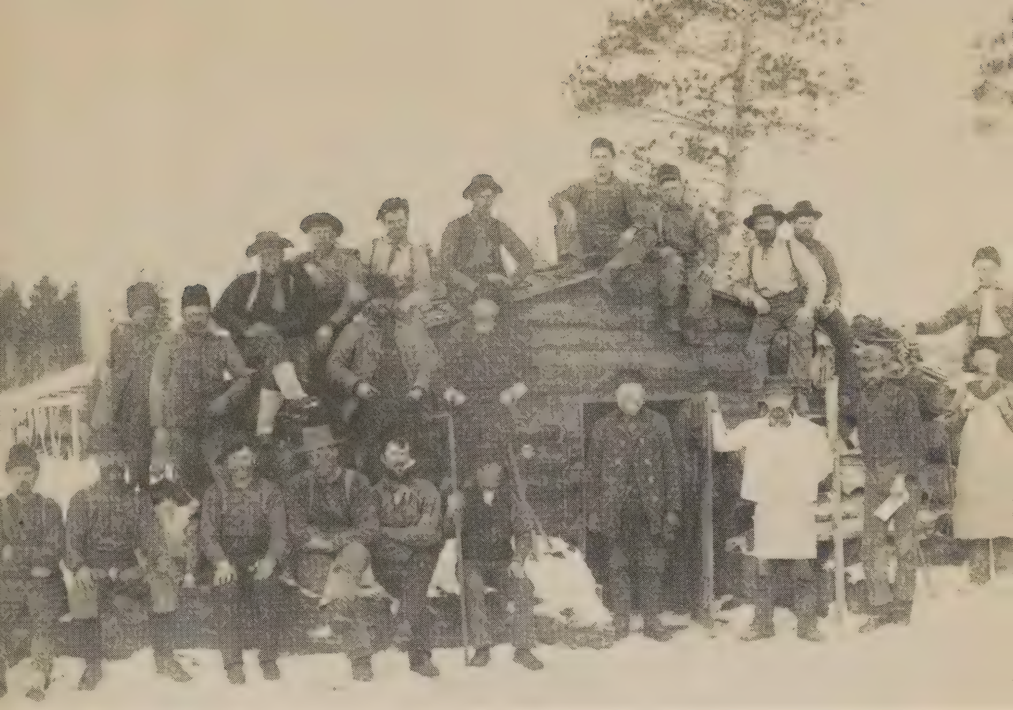




Bridge Square, Minneapolis, in 1904

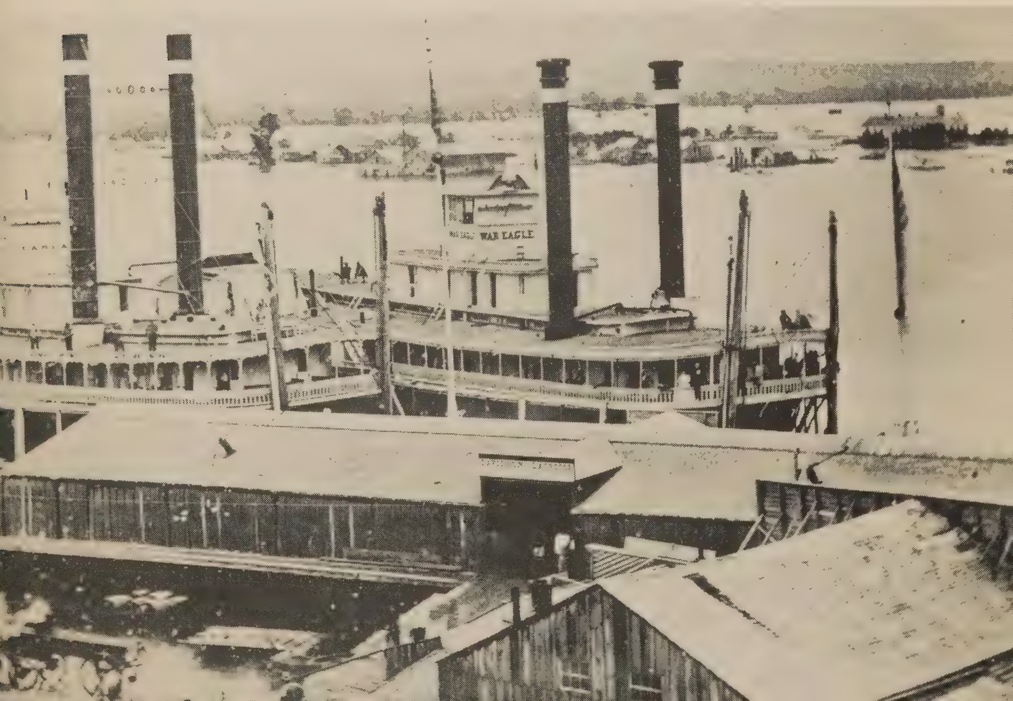
A. W. Johnson — No. 3. Hovels for horses and oxen at Abe Johnson's Depot Camp on Yellow River in Wisconsin. Abe Johnson is seen riding in the leading cutter (which A.W.J. still has in his possession). Behind him are a few empty bunks just going out for the loads of logs. Abe Johnson's big fur coat is reported to have cost $500.

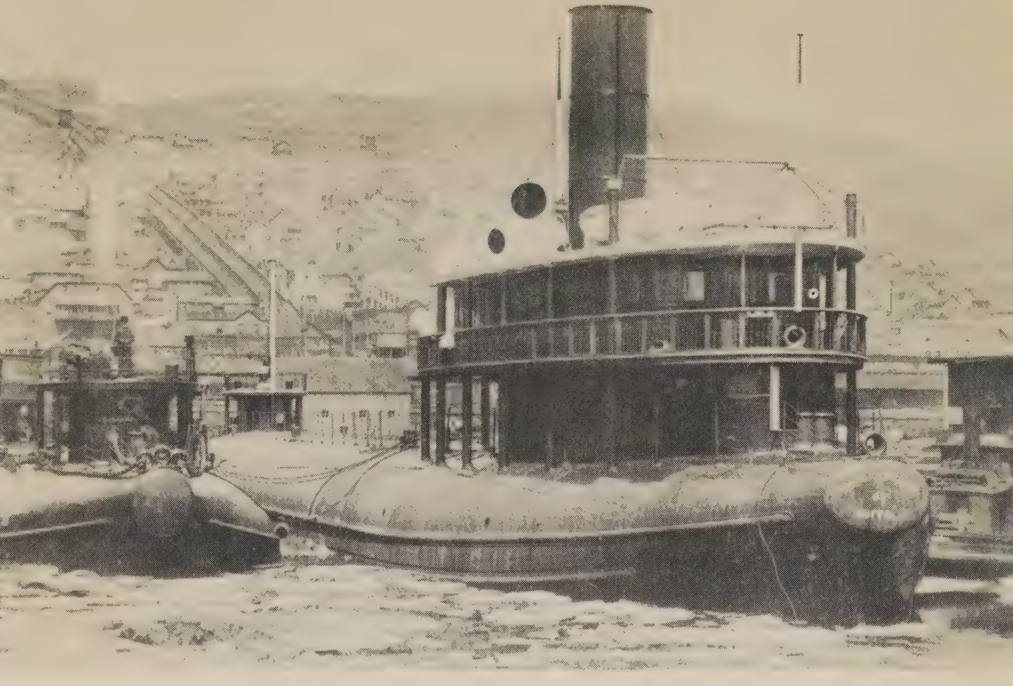




A. W. Johnson — No. 2. Depot Camp on the Yellow River used by Abe Johnson while logging in that region during the 1890's. Position of the camp, two to three miles from Rice Lake Dam; 12 miles from Spooner, Wisconsin; 15 miles from Shell Lake.

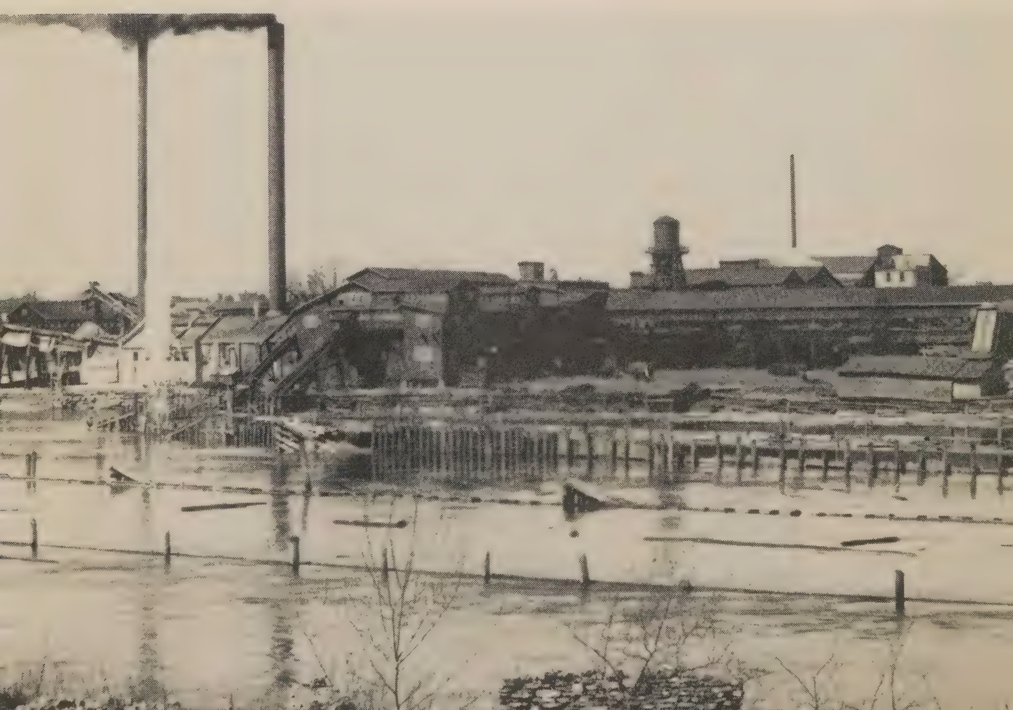
Steamboats, Itasca and War Eagle, at St. Paul Levee, 1859 from Bromley, Album No. 2





Whaleback "Thomas Wilson" at Duluth, Minnesota. c. 1893. Incline Railway in background.

C. A. Smith Lumber Mill, Minneapolis, Minnesota. (received by Museum November 6, 1922)



membership reached the 2,000 mark. The church is built in a modified colonial style, and has ample facilities for liturgical worship and for parish education as well as other church activities. It is one of the outstanding churches of St. Paul, and of the Minnesota Conference. It is valued at more than $600,000.00.[13]

In fifty years after the founding of First Lutheran Church in 1854 only three new Augustana congregations were established in St. Paul, while hundreds of congregations were organized in rural areas, even in remote parts of the prairies of Dakota and Canada. Yet the potential Augustana members were far more numerous in the city than in most of those country communities. The home mission strategy of the Conference had been based almost entirely on the idea of greater geographical extension. The rural community and the rural or village church seemed the ideal. The city was thought of as an artificial, if not an evil thing, a place of worldly pleasures, where innocent young people from the country were led astray, from which they came back sophisticated and soft and proud, not fit for the farm. This rural psychology was deeply ingrained in the immigrants from rural Sweden, and was not readiy changed when they came to America.

About the turn of the century a new feeling began to dominate the thinking of many in the Conference. City pastors began to plead fervently for more consideration of the religious needs in their areas. The geographical outreach had gone to its limits in all directions, and the Conference was facing a new situation. Country people were beginning to have less fear of the city. Rather they began to desire to share in the cultural and social advantages of the city. The city congregations themselves had become strong enough to do missionary work, and were becoming more aware of their opportunities and their responsibilities.

Within a few years the results of these factors were beginning to show. While only three new congregations had been established in fifty years, five new congregations were organized in a little over two years, from August, 1907 to September, 1909. These were: Augustana, 1907; Gloria Dei, 1908; Clara, 1908 (name changed to St. Paul in 1923); Salem, St. Anthony Park, 1909 (dissolved 1924); Arlington Hills, 1909. This activity won from the Conference President, J. A. Krantz, the comment that "the St. Paul District seems to have awakened from its long sleep and to have seen its thousand opportunities."

Rev. A. Noren, pastor in South St. Paul, recognized the need of a new congregation on the west side of St. Paul, and in 1905 he began to conduct Swedish services in a rented German Lutheran Church, on South Robert Street. Here he organized the Augustana Lutheran Church in 1907. A church was built at South Robert and Tyler in 1909. The congregation was united as a parish with South St. Paul until 1918. Growth was slow until in the 1930's when the congregation secured its first resident pastor, Paul H. A. Noren, a son of the first pastor. Since 1934 the membership has increased from 100 to more than 600. Under the leadership of the present pastor (1957), Karl J. Danielson, the congregation is making plans to relocate in a new residential area, on South Robert Street, one mile south of the original church.[14]

Noren of South St. Paul also organized the Clara congregation, now known as St. Paul Lutheran Church, but the preparatory work had been done by Rev. B. Westerlund of Emmanuel Church. The first meeting place was a chapel at Sherburne Avenue and St. Albans Street. It was bought and moved to Central Avenue and Grotto Street. Noren was called as pastor and served until 1924. A church was built at Marshall Avenue and Chatsworth Street. By 1945 the congregation had grown to a membership of 490, and has remained at about this level. The residential area near the church is now largely populated by Negroes. Under the leadership of Pastor Carl C. Sunwall and with the assistance of Miss Anna Wendell as parish worker, St. Paul Lutheran Church has made a notable beginning in serving an inter-racial group of people.[15]

A small group of members of the Zion congregation living in the St. Anthony Park District were charter members of Salem Lutheran Church, organized in 1909 by J. A. Frost, pastor of Zion. A small frame church was built at Ellis Street and Territorial Road, but the growth of the congregation was very slow. It was dissolved in 1924.

In response to a petition from the St. Paul District, the executive committee of the Conference made arrangements for the starting of an English congregation in the Arlington Hills section of the city in 1909. The Gustavus Adolphus Church granted permission to use its school building, and C. J. Carlson of the G. A. Church was present and was elected honorary chairman at the organization of a "mission society" which was a preliminary step towards the establishment of a congregation. C. J. Karl was present at the request of the executive committee and served as chairman. The English department of the G. A. Sunday school, with 72 pupils, was turned over to the new mission. The executive committee spent $74.00 of Conference home mission funds for taxes and interest on property purchased for the new mission, and made arrangements to have Professor E. W. Carlson of Minnesota College preach there on Sundays, with a salary of $30.00 per month. The Arlington Hills congregation was received into the Conference in 1910 and was granted home mission aid in the amount of $600.00 per year from the time a pastor would be secured, provided the congregation would raise $400.00 per year.[16]

The congregation worshipped in a temporary chapel at Payne Avenue and Rose Street for a few years, until a church was built at Greenbrier and Geranium in 1914. The membership had increased to over 700 in 1924, and a new church was urgently needed. The basement was built that year. The depression that began in 1929 caused a postponement of the building of the super-structure until 1937. The congregation had then more than 1,200 members. By the end of 1942 Arlington Hills had surpassed all the other Augustana congregations in St. Paul in point of membership, with 1,815 baptized members. In the Conference it was surpassed ony by St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, which then had 1,862. At the present time (1957) Arlington Hills has 3,903 members, and is second largest in the entire Augustana Lutheran Church, exceeded only by Mount Olivet, Minneapolis. In 1949 Arlington Hills built a youth center, giving facilities for a unique program of church activities for the young people and children of the congregation and the community. The pastors who have served this congregation are Nels Lundgren, Albert Loreen, V. G. Ogren, Clarence T. Nelson, Melvin A. Hammarberg, and George F. Hall. Associate pastors have been Philip Holmberg and Constant Johnson.[17]

The blossoming forth of five new congregations in 25 months, together with the ones previously established, gave St. Paul a network of Augustana congregations sufficient to serve the area adequately for a number of years. In the next four decades only one new congregation was begun.

Carmel Lutheran Church was organized in 1924. The beginning of this group was a branch Sunday school of the Gustavus Adolphus Church, two of the deacons, Oscar L. Olson and C. J. Carlson, being in charge. At first the services were held in a vacant store building, then in an annex of the Harrison school. In 1923 the congregation (G. A.) bought lots at Earl and Geranium, and a portable chapel was moved to this location. In addition to the Sunday school, services were held, with Deacon Olson and Pastor S. Hjalmar Swanson alternating as preachers. At the organization of the congregation the Conference president, P. A. Mattson, served as chairman.[18]

F. H. Hanson became the first resident pastor, and a church was built in 1928. The congregation has grown to a membership of 440. The original name, Carmel of Phalen Park, was changed in 1935 to Mount Carmel, St. Paul.

From 1880 to 1900 the population of the city of St. Paul had increased fourfold, from 41,000 to 163,000. Since 1900 the growth has been less spectacular, but the population has nearly doubled in half a century. The urbanizing trend in Minnesota, as elsewhere in the nation, was hastened by World War II. In 1950 the population was 309,000. New suburban areas sprang up north of the city, and the residential area on the east side continued to expand.

In 1953 the Board of American Missions of the Augustana Church established three new congregations in these suburban areas. Beaver Lake on the east side, Advent and St. Michael's on the north side. Rev. Thomas Wersell, regional director of American missions, and Dr. Emil Swenson, Conference president, were the leaders in this triple-pronged movement into the St. Paul suburbs. Rev. Alfred Grossmann became the first pastor of the Beaver Lake Church, Rev. Thomas Basich of the Advent Church, and Rev. Robert Engwall of the St. Michael's Church. Beaver Lake attained a membership of 440 in the first three years of its existence. Advent had 764 at the end of 1956, and St. Michael's 408. In all three of these new congregations building projects have been carried on, to provide first units suitable for temporary places of worship and present and future educational facilities.[19]

Another of the present-day suburban congregations of St. Paul, Bethany, was organized as a rural group in 1903 by Rev. Westerlund of Emmanuel Church. Most of the original members of Bethany were people who worked on the large farm owned by the "Empire builder," James J. Hill at North Oaks, five miles west of White Bear Lake. Services were held in various school houses, one near the Hill farm, one at Turtle Lake, one "near Peter Olsens." The congregation, which never numbered as many as 100 members until in 1953, was connected with Emmanuel, St. Paul, or other nearby congregations, until Gordon W. Spong became the first resident pastor in 1955. Two years later the membership was up to 285.[20]

White Bear Lake, once thought of as a pleasant resort a dozen miles away from St. Paul, conveniently reached by train or electric trolley, has in recent years become a suburban area.

A Swedish Lutheran congregation was organized in White Bear Lake in 1888 by Rev. Gustaf Wahlund of the Spring Lake Church, North Branch. He continued to serve the new congregation until 1890, when it was united with the Bayport-Afton parish, of which Jonas Magny was the pastor. At various times it had parish connections with Bethany, North Oaks, or with Forest Lake, until 1924 when White Bear Lake and Carmel, St. Paul, were united into a parish. At that time White Bear Lake had 94 members. The English language was coming into use. It was becoming apparent that the congregation could serve people of other national origins than the Swedish. A neighboring church of the Joint Synod of Ohio (since 1930 part of the American Lutheran Church) was having a struggle to maintain its work in White Bear Lake. In 1929 the two congregations agreed on a merger. This was one of the first, if not the very first step towards inter-synodical Lutheran cooperation in Minnesota, which led to the establishment of Regional Home Mission Committees. Dr. P. A. Mattson, Conference president, referred to this in his report in 1930:

"From the time of the early settlements in the Northwest the various synods have carried on church work among their nationalities, using the mother tongue. In the course of time we shall use a common language in our church work, and even now we find that in a great many localities there are overchurched conditions. It will be necessary to have some understanding in regard to the common mission fields, where our missions overlap, in order that mission funds may not be wasted. To be able to come to an understanding, the various synods, operating in the Northwest, by their representatives came together some over a year ago and started the so-called Council of Reference. This council is working on, endeavoring to solve the overchurched conditions and to reach some understanding when new fields are taken up. A good example is set by the people at White Bear, Minn. There the congregation of the Joint Synod of Ohio has united with our Church, and has received a letter of dismission from that synod. In matters of this kind we must not only learn to receive, but to give." [21]

The smallest and the most unique congregation in St. Paul still remains to be mentioned. The Bethesda Deaconess Home had been instituted by the Conference in 1902, and the first probationers began their training the following year. Within a few years there were twenty deaconesses and probationers. In 1909 the Deaconess congregation was organized. A small chapel in the hospital became their church. The hospital superintendent, C. A. Hultkrans, was their pastor until 1915 when he was succeeded by J. A. Krantz. The deaconess training school was merged with Immanuel Deaconess Institute in Omaha in 1930, which marked the end of the Deaconess congregation. During the score of years that it existed it exerted an influence far beyond its proportionate size. Every member had given full time service to the church.[22]

Ever since Father Lucian Galtier in 1841 built a log church and named it the Chapel of St. Paul, Roman Catholicism has flourished in Ramsey County. According to recent statistics, 57 per cent of the 213,290 Christian Church members in the county are Roman Catholics. Of the 91,184 Protestants, 63 per cent are Lutherans. Of the 57,679 Lutherans, 13,375 or 23 per cent, are members of 11 Augustana congregations.[23]

The figures just quoted are based on the 1953 "Yearbook of American Churches," and are valuable chiefly for the percentages shown. Later statistics show that there are 16,922 Augustana members in Ramsey County. In the entire St. Paul area, including White Bear Lake and South St. Paul, there are 18,121 (as of January 1, 1957).

The St. Paul District was one of the four original districts established by the Conference in 1870. It included Minneapolis, Chisago, Washington, Isanti, and Anoka Counties, some congregations in Wisconsin, and soon was extended to Duluth and Superior.

Eventually it was made to include Sherburne, Stearns, Benton, Morrison, Todd, Crow Wing, Kanabec, Aitkin, Pine, Carlton, St. Louis, Lake and Cook counties in Minnesota, and nine counties in northwestern Wisconsin. In 1887 the conference had 42 congregations in the St. Paul District, and it was then divided into three districts, St. Paul, Chisago, and Duluth. In 1910 the Minneapolis District was formed, thus giving the St. Paul District approximately the same boundaries as now.

The second oldest congregation in the present district is Our Saviour's, Hastings, organized in 1871 by Jonas Magny. A little frame church, built in 1874, was used until 1954. The congregation had experienced slow development, until about the World War II era. Except for a short period in 1901 and 1902, the Hastings congregations had no resident pastor, but was served by neighboring pastors and students. The first full time resident pastor was Emeroy Johnson in 1940. Since then the membership has tripled, to 550, in 1957.

At the village of Afton, on the bank of the St. Croix River a few miles north of Hastings, Swedish immigrants setted in the early territorial days. Jacob Fahlstrom, the first Swede in Minnesota, was reputed to have lived at Afton in the 1840's. Eric Norelius visited the place at least as early as 1861, but stated that no congregation had been organized at that time.[24]

The Afton congregation was organized in 1882 by Rev. A. F. Tornell of Stillwater. Originally called the Swedish Lutheran Church, the name was changed to Memorial Lutheran in 1933. It has had parish connections with various nearby congregations. The membership has generally been rather small, but has nearly doubled in the past six years and now (1957) is 258.[25]

Across the river from Afton, in Hudson, Wisconsin, a few Swedish settlers were living in the seventies and the eighties. Through the influence of Otto W. Arnquist, who had come to America at the age of ten and had received education sufficient to enable him to practice law at the age of 26, a Swedish Lutheran "church society" was organized in Hudson in 1891. Jonas Magny and other pastors made occasional visits, and under the leadership of Rev. A. Bengtson of New Richmond the Zion congregation was organized in 1893. It has remained rather small throughout its history.[26]

A congregation organized in New Richmond in 1891 was merged in 1945 with an E. L. C. congregation. At Mann Valley, near New Richmond, a small congregation was organized in 1884, but was not received into the Conference until 1910. It was dissolved in 1942. A congregation at Star Prairie, near New Richmond, organized in 1876, was dissolved in 1925.

In Eau Claire, Wisconsin Swedish immigrants setted in 1866, but they were very few in number until about 1880. The Immanuel congregation was organized by Jonas Magny in 1883, and a church was built a few years later. At Levis, a few miles from Eau Claire, the Lebanon congregation was organized in 1883 under the leadership of theological student J. E. Hedberg. The two congregations formed a parish until the Levis group was dissolved in 1948. The Eau Claire congregation has reached a membership of 428.[27]

The story of the institutions of the Conference in St. Paul is closely connected with the congregations in the district, but will be related in a separate chapter of this volume. Pastors and people in St. Paul have provided much of the leadership and much of the sacrificial giving of time and money for the building up of Bethesda Hospital and other projects.

NOTES

[1] Nelson, Helge, *The Swedes and the Swedish Settlements in North America,* 203f.

[2] Alexis, Gerhard T., *First Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minnesota, Centennial,* 1854-1954, 9. In my previous volume, *A Church Is Planted,* page 52, it is stated that the first church was built at Bradley and Patridge. This is an error. Dr. Alexis has called my attention to the fact that a Swedish Church built at Bradley and Patridge belonged to another denomination.

[3] Alexis, G., *op. cit.,* 11; *Minn. Stats-Tidning,* June 25, 1881.

[4] Monten's newspaper ventures and his controversies with Norelius are mentioned in my book *Eric Norelius,* 195-207.

[5] Alexis, G., *op. cit.,* 14f.

[6] Alexis, G., *op. cit.,* 18ff.

[7] Alexis, G., *op. cit.,* 15f; Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och Dess Förs. Hist.,* I, 449ff; *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* 1930, 34; *The Advance,* Vol. XV, No. 3, Mar.-Apr., 1957.

[8] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.,* I, 452ff.

[9] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.,* I, 455f.

[10] Alexis, G., *op. cit.,* 13.

[11] Alexis, G., *op. cit.,* 16.

[12] Alexis, G., *op. cit.*, 18.
[13] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 460f; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical Reports.
[14] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 458; information given to the author by Karl J. Danielson.
[15] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 461ff; *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical Reports; *The National Lutheran*, January-February, 1957, 22.
[16] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1909, 57f; 1910, 50f; Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 451, 465.
[17] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Statistical Reports.
[18] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 474f.
[19] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1954, 70ff; Statistical Reports.
[20] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 473.
[21] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 475f; *Minn. Conf. Minutes, 1930*, 33.
[22] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 169ff, 472; *Minn. Conf. Minutes, 1902;* 1930.
[23] *Churches and Church Membership in the United States*, NCCUSA, Series C, No. 20, Table 51.
[24] Norelius, Eric, *De Svenska Lutherska Församlingarnas och Svenskarnes Historia i Amerika*, I, 761; Johnson, Emeroy, *Early Life of Eric Norelius*, 317.
[25] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 387f.
[26] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 419ff.
[27] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 476ff.

Chapter XIII

Minneapolis and Suburban Area

Minneapolis, the mill city, city of lakes, Aquatennial city—these are some of the titles given to the metropolis of Minnesota and the Northwest. According to the census of 1950 it was a city of more than half a million people—517,277, to be exact.

Back in 1865 it was two separate towns, Minneapolis on the west side of the Mississippi, with 4,607 people, and St. Anthony on the east side, with 3,499. The center of business on the west side was still at Bridge Square (where Hennepin and Nicollet join). There was little business west of Washington Avenue. The principal residence sections were on North Washington Avenue and on the streets about as far west as Tenth Street.[1]

Lutherans were few in Minneapolis at that time. The Swedish Lutheran Augustana congregation (now First Augustana) was founded in 1866. During its first years the growth was slow. Its first church was built in 1868 at Washington Avenue South and 13th Street, a site which at that time was near the edge of the city.

As the city grew and spread on the north side the Bethlehem congregation was organized in 1874, and a church was built the next year on North 10th Street, but later moved to Sixth Street between 11th and 12th Avenues. Growth of the Augustana congregations kept pace with the city's increase in population. In 1880 the membership of the two congregations was 1.2 per cent of the total population of the city. By 1890 the city had more than tripled in size, and so had the congregations. From then on to the present time the Augustana congregations in Minneapolis have been growing at a rate greater than the rate of increase in the city's population, as indicated in the following table:

Year	Population of Mpls.	Augustana Members	Percentage of pop. in Aug. Church
1900	202,718	3,608	.0178
1910	301,408	5,412	.0179
1920	380,582	8,085	.0212
1930	464,356	11,217	.0241
1940	492,370	15,366	.0312
1950	517,277	26,941	.0521
1957	540,000 (est.)	38,761	.0717

Minneapolis is rated as second only to Philadelphia in total Lutheran strength among the cities of America. And in Minneapolis the Augustana Church is the strongest numerically of all the Lutheran bodies. According to one recent report, 30 per cent of the 120,825 Lutherans in Hennepin County were Augustana members.[2]

During the 15 years following the close of the Civil War the basic industries of Minneapolis made their initial forward strides, and the framework of the transportation system of the Northwest was built, bringing Minneapolis into touch with the grain-producing and lumber-producing regions, and with Chicago and the east. The same period also saw the consolidation of St. Anthony with Minneapolis, to form one city.[3]

In the tremendously rapid growth that began about 1880 the Scandinavians became a very large factor, which in due time made Minneapolis the strongly Lutheran center that it is today.

It is of interest to notice that the Swedish immigrants were somewhat more ready to choose urban homes than were the Norwegians and the Danes. A sociological study made in the early part of this century says: "In the vast majority of cases the Scandinavian has first been an agriculturist; the desire for ownership of land seems to be inherent. A falling off from the years 1870 to 1900 in the number of those engaged in agriculture was due to an increase in the immigration of city people, and also to the fact that many of the old settlers moved to town and engaged in business. . . . The Swedes are much more urban than are the Norwegians and the Danes. Nearly one-third of the foreign-born Swedes in 1905 were in our three large cities; while less than one-fifth of the Danes and Norwegians were in the same cities.[4]

The First Augustana congregation in Minneapolis had made slow progress during the first decade of its existence, partly because the number of Swedes was not large, partly because of rivalry between the Lutherans and the "Mission Friends." Before the end of the 1870's, however, the membership reached the 500 mark. The original church, at Washington Avenue South and 13th Street, was becoming too small. Ternstedt, who became Augustana's pastor in 1878, began a project of relocation, and a new church—the present one—was completed in 1883, at Seventh Street and Eleventh Avenue South, which then was a fine residential area. The city was settled as far south as Franklin, and expanding rapidly. Before 1890 the area south of Lake Street had a few scattered dwelling places.

Minneapolis had no paved streets before 1880. Wooden sidewalks were used, even in the business district. In the eighties miles of wood block pavement were laid. There were a few miles of narrow gauge street railway on which one-horse "bob-tail" cars were operated. About 1890 the entire system was replaced by an electric system. Business buildings were put up without much regard to any planning. It was also common, as the business structures encroached on residential areas to move the dwelling houses to more distant parts of the city. The streets were often obstructed with these travelling houses.[5]

Church buildings also were transported in similar manner. The old Augustana church was purchased and moved to a new location at Fifth Avenue South and Eighth Street, where it became the first home of St. John's Lutheran Church, organized in 1883 as an "English" Lutheran Church. St. John's belonged to the Minnesota Conference until 1891, when it joined the Synod of the Northwest.

Carl J. Petri, a young professor at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, became pastor of First Augustana, Minneapolis, in 1888. He was American-born, 32 years old and had been in the ministry eight years. Coming to Minneapolis at a time of rapid growth and development in the city, he soon became a leader in expansion of Lutheran church activities. The congregation had 1,000 members when Petri came. Ten years later there were 1,600. With relatively minor fluctuations the membership stayed at about this level through the rest of Petri's long pastorate. After 38 years of devoted and effective service to the Augustana congregation and to the Minnesota Conference, he died in 1926.

Besides his work as pastor of a large city congregation, he was active in the general work of the Conference and in various enterprises in Minneapolis. He served for a number of years as vice president of the Conference. He served several terms as a member of the Board of Gustavus Adolphus College, and was one of the leading promoters of Minnesota College. He was the originator and promoter of the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the first Swedish settlement in America, in 1888. Five years later he was active in arranging for the observance of the 300th anniversary of the Uppsala decree, which established the Lutheran Church in Sweden. By means of these and similar mass events in Minneapolis the Swedish Lutheran churches were gaining city-wide publicity and notice. In 1898 he was one of the organizers of Swedish Hospital, and the first president of the Hospital Board. After starting in rented quarters the Hospital occupied its own building in 1902 at Tenth Avenue South and Eighth Street.[6]

While Swedish Hospital was organized as an independent institution, not under direct ownership and control of any church body, it has been largely under the leadership of men closely connected with the Lutheran churches in Minneapolis.

The First Augustana congregation, under Petri's leadership, came to grips with the need for an extensive social mission in its community. On August 27, 1894 a request was sent to Immanuel Deaconess Institute, Omaha, Nebraska, asking that a deaconess be assigned to work in the congregation. The request was granted the following year, and Sister Cecelia Nelson became the first deaconess. A "Mission Cottage" was established in rented quarters at 1307 Eighth Street South. A larger building was leased in 1901 at 1100 Eighth Street South. A Women's Mission Society was organized in the congregation to handle the affairs of the mission with the pastor as ex officio president. This society bought property in 1908 at 1405 Tenth Avenue South. Further expansion took place at this location, with a children's home being built in 1915, an old people's home and a home for young women in 1920. The mission property was then valued at about $150,000.00. Fourteen deaconesses had served at the institution for longer or shorter periods. Eight young women of the congregation had entered the deaconess calling.[7]

At its 50th anniversary in 1946 the Mission Colony dedicated a large addition to the home for the aged, which thus was able to provide care for more than 100 residents. The children's home was caring for some forty homeless children each year. The young women's home provided a homelike and Christian atmosphere for some 25 or 30 girls while working or studying in the city or recuperating from illness. Sister Bothilda Swenson, the first deaconess in the Augustana Lutheran Church, was superintendent of the Colony for many years. She was succeeded by Sister Elfrida Sandberg. The colony occupies almost an entire city block between Fourteenth and Fifteenth Avenues and Ninth and Tenth Streets South.[8]

Dr. J. W. Johnson succeeded Petri and served from 1927 to 1939. Since that time the pastors have been: Vernon Serenius, 1939-1949; Vernon Swenson, 1949-1956. Bernard Spong came in 1957.

Augustana's first "daughter," Bethlehem, organized in 1874, had great difficulty in securing a resident pastor. The first ten years of the congregation's history were a period of trial and disappointment. The very existence of the congregation was threatened. Services were conducted as regularly as possible by the pastor of Augustana, who already had more than enough to do in his own parish. In 1878, at the annual meeting, it was stated that there were only 16 members in good standing. Later the same year nine of these left the fold, (among these five deacons and two trustees) because they did not want to remain Lutherans. The litte flock was served that year for four months by student Carl J. Petri, and the threatened dissolution of the congregation was averted. The first church was completed at this time, but the location was found to be unsuitable, and the church was moved in 1882.

A. J. Enstam, ordained in 1884, became Bethlehem's first resident pastor, and the congregation began to experience a remarkable growth, necessitating the erection of a new church. Again a new site was chosen, at Lyndale and 14th Avenue North, and the basement for the new church was built in 1888. The building was finished in 1891.[9]

In this church occurred a significant and historic event in 1889, the first "district" young people's convention in Minneapolis, evidently the first one in the Conference. It was reported in considerable detail in a Swedish newspaper, under the heading "An Interesting Young People's Meeting in Minneapolis":

"The Swedish Lutheran congregations in Minneapolis work with vigor and seriousness among the many young people. Emanuel, on the east side, Bethehem on the north side, and Augustana on the south side all have active young people's societies.

"On Wednesday, July 31, something new happened in the history of these organizations. Bethlehem congregation's society had invited the Augustana society to a joint meeting . . . and the Bethlehem church basement was filled with young people . . . After the program had been begun with Scripture reading and prayer by the Bethlehem Society's president, M. A. Anderson, Rev. Enstam gave the following address of welcome:

" 'Honored members of the Augustana young people's society:

" 'It has become my duty to welcome you on behalf of the Bethlehem Society up here to our little gathering this evening. I hope no one will construe **up here** in the wrong way, for I thought of it only in a geographical sense, and that we live at an altitude of about 100 feet higher than our friends down south. In members, age, and experience you as a society are far ahead of us. When the question was raised as to inviting you to a joint meeting we were uncertain whether the invitation would be accepted; but those who doubted find themselves tonight agreeably surprised at the sight of such a large group of young men and women, representing the better part of our Swedish youth in Minneapolis . . .'

"After the speech a song was sung by the Bethlehem church choir and then there was an interesting and edifying discussion on 'What should be the goal of a young people's society?' The discussion was introduced by the vice president of the Augustana Society, student O. Sylvan, and the president of the Bethlehem Society. In the discussion it was stated that the goal of a young people's society should be:

"1. To gather the young people and interest them in the work of Christ's Church.

"2. To offer the young people a true Christian fellowship and save them from all sinful and compromising contacts which are so frequently found, especially in the cities.

"3. To give the young people an opportunity to cultivate their God-given talents so they can become useful members of society.

"4. To show that true Christianity can provide a better social life and more happiness than the sinful world and its pleasures.

"Pastors Petri and Enstam expressed their joy over the beginning that had been made towards a more united work among the various Lutheran young people's societies in Minneapolis. . . . After the program had concluded, the Bethlehem society served ice cream and cake. No one who was present regretted having come. We shall long remember this pleasant evening, and we hope that more such occasions will be provided for our young people in Minneapolis." [10]

"Joint meetings" of young people's groups were held from time to time, but no district or conference organizations were effected until many years later. The first attempt at a Conference Luther League convention came in 1896. Concerning this gathering the following report has been given by one of the participants, Oscar Sandahl:

"Byron A. Lindgren, Minneapolis, and I had our parental homes in Stillwater. He and I were active members of our young people's society in Stillwater ever since our confirmation until we went to new fields of labor. Lindgren and I often talked about how we could plan our young people's meetings so they would be more 'modern' and appealing. We had heard a little about the American denominations and how they carried on the work of their young people's organizations at that time, and we wondered if we could do something similar. One day Lindgren and I decided to go and speak to our pastor in Stillwater, the highly respected and beloved Joel L. Haff, to learn what he thought of it. Pastor Haff promised to take this matter up with Pastor C. J. Petri, which he did. As far as I can remember, this was in 1895. A committee met at the Augustana Church in Minneapolis—in the sacristy under the organ. This group consisted of representatives from the St. Paul-Minneapolis district, which at that time was one district, and the Chisago District. I was the representative from Stillwater.

I seem to recall that there were only five persons at the meeting. C. J. Petri was the only pastor. At this meeting it was decided that a 'young people's convention' should be held in the Augustana Church at a suitable time, and Petri agreed to take the lead in making arrangements for it. The purpose was to bring about the organization of a Conference Luther League. The project was successful. A young people's convention was held in the Augustana Church in Minneapolis June 16-17, 1896 by the young people's societies in the St. Paul and Chisago Districts."[11] However, no actual organization on a Conference-wide basis became a reality until in 1911. The Minnesota Conference Luther League was organized in August of that year in Cokato. Leaders in the movement then were Pastors A. Noren, C. O. Lundquist, and O. J. Arthur, and Dr. Conrad Peterson of the Gustavus faculty.

J. G. Hultkrans, who served as pastor of Bethlehem congregation 1892-1912, saw a growth in membership to 740, and the establishment of a "daughter" congregation, Salem at Camden Place, which then was considered a separate community some two or three miles north of Minneapolis.

In the Bethlehem church occurred an event that proved to be the origin of direct responsibility for a foreign mission field of the Augustana Lutheran Church. Pastors in Minneapolis had been spurred to great interest in overseas missions by addresses given by a returned missionary from China, Eric Folke. At about the same time a missionary by the name of Skrefsrud was visiting the Bethlehem parsonage, and the pastors in Minneapolis and St. Paul had opportunity to meet him and hear more about the cause of missions overseas. After discussion and prayer it was agreed to call a meeting of all interested persons to consider the question of organizing a mission society. The meeting was held in the Bethlehem Church, September 3 and 4, 1901, with P. A. Mattson, pastor of Ebenezer Church, as the chairman. C. J. Collins gave an address on "Our Church's responsibility to the heathen world." F. M. Eckman, pastor at Center City, was an influential leader in the movement. A second meeting was held in Bethlehem Church on April 8, 1902, at which the formal organization of "The Evangelical Lutheran Foreign Mission Society" took place. This Society called and sent Rev. A. W. Edwins to China in 1905. He was given a field in

Honan, China, for his mission work. Four more missionaries were called and sent to China in the next few years, and in 1908 the Society offered the mission to the Synod, an offer which was accepted, though there was some opposition to it.[12]

The problems of the urban church have been depicted in many pastoral reports to the Conference presidents. A typical one of the era about 1900 is this from J. G. Hultkrans of Bethlehem Church, in which he gives five reasons for slow growth of the city congregations:

1. Decreasing immigration. "We now have to work with those who have been here a long time and have drunk in a great deal of the false spirit of freedom."
2. Many people move out to the country to live a more quiet life.
3. (The greatest reason) The secret societies and our Church's attitude to them.
4. Poverty. Many are in need of help.
5. Many stay here only a short time.

The report goes on to say that "Every congregation should have one 'deacon' or city missionary to go from house to house to get people to come to church, and to get Christian literature into the homes." [13]

A strongly worded district report, written by Hultkrans, was read at the conference convention in 1900. In this report he called attention to the problems of the city churches, and the need of more workers in the cities. The district made a direct request for aid and the plea convinced the Executive Committee that something should be done. A lay preacher, August Westlund, began to work as city missionary in the Twin Cities in October, 1901. His duties were: To visit the railroad stations and help "our countrymen" (Swedish immigrants) by handing out Christian literature and good advice; to visit hospitals, Swedish hotels and boardinghouses, county poorhouses, poor and sick families. He was not to serve as assistant to any pastor. His salary was $550.00 per year.

In the first four months he made 52 hospital calls, eight calls at poorhouses, 102 calls at family homes. He found few Swedes at the railroad stations. While there were a few good boardinghouses, most of them he called "foul." [14]

A few years later the Conference president, Dr. Fremling, tried to impress upon the Conference that it had an important mission field in the Twin Cities. He said: "The 'mission field' is generally thought of as being the frontiers, such as North Dakota and Canada . . . but we should give heed to what the president of the St. Paul District says: 'The Twin Cities are the most extensive and important mission field in the Conference.' "[15]

The Conference, still largely dominated by the rural areas, was slow to give heed to the pleas of the city pastors and the advice of the president.

Hultkrans was succeeded at Bethlehem by Edward Schuch. After his death in 1921 the congregation was vacant for a year, after which Emil Swenson was called. Two of the significant events of his period of service were: The building of a new and larger church at Fremont and 22nd, North; and a court case which affected every church and pastor in the state. Swenson was called as witness in a case involving a member of his congregation. He declined to answer a certain question on the grounds that the information was in the nature of a confession and therefore a confidential matter between pastor and parishioner. The judge found Swenson guilty of contempt of court, and sentenced him to a fine of $100.00 or 30 days in jail. The case received nation-wide publicity, and Swenson was the recipient of a flood of telephone calls and mail, nearly all of it in support of his stand, and with promise of aid to finance a legal battle if necessary. Even Roman Catholic priests, and at least one bishop, applauded him and offered help. The Minnesota Supreme Court reversed the decision of the lower court. In the meantime the Minnesota legislature passed a law specifically giving full recognition to the confidential nature of the Protestant confession.[16]

Swenson was vice president of the Conference at the time of his trial on the contempt charge, having been elected to that position in 1929 for the first time. He was re-elected each year until 1939, when he was elected president of the Conference, to succeed P. A. Mattson, who declined re-election. Swenson was re-elected to one-year terms until 1943, serving also as pastor of Bethlehem. In 1943 the Conference made the presidency a full-time office, and Swenson served three four-year terms, retiring in 1955. The Conference then elected him President Emeritus. During his administration the Conference headquarters were established in the Minnesota College building, 415 Harvard

Street Southeast, and moved in 1945 to the present building, 2445 Park Avenue.

After Swenson's resignation from the Bethlehem congregation it has had two pastors: Paul H. A. Noren, 1944-1953; A. W. Arthur, since 1953.

The merger of St. Anthony with Minneapolis took place in 1872. In the same year Emanuel Lutheran Church had its beginning, though the actual organization did not take place until twelve years later. Andrew Dahlgren, a deacon in the Augustana congregation, and two other members of the church, A. M. Anderson and Charles Nelson, began to conduct prayer services and Sunday school in a rented building at First Avenue and Second Street Southeast. It was a private venture on their part until 1878, when the Augustana congregation took charge of it. In 1884 a group of 18 members living on the east side of Minneapolis petitioned for the right to organize a congregation. This was granted and the Emanuel congregation was organized with Ternstedt, pastor of Augustana, as chairman of the meeting. There were 31 charter members, including Rev. Alfred Melin, who became the first pastor, serving from 1884 to 1888. The congregation bought a former Baptist Church at Fifth Street and Fourth Avenue Southeast and used it as the place of worship until 1896, when the basement of the present church at 13th and Monroe, Northeast, became available. The church was completed in 1904 and dedicated at the 20th anniversary of the congregation.

O. A. Nelson served as pastor of Emanuel from 1894 to 1909. When he came there were 380 members, and when he left there were 700.[17]

Under the leadership of pastors O. A. Elmquist, 1910-1916, G. K. Stark, 1917-1935, Nels Lundgren, 1935-1940, C. S. Odell, 1940-1946, and William J. Siegel since 1946, the congregation has gone through periods of change in the characteristics of the inner city where the church is located, but there have been no great fluctuations in the membership of the congregation. The latest figures (1957) show 1,476 members.[18]

A break with an old tradition seems to have occurred in Emanuel. Ever since the days of 1858 when four pastors and four laymen constituted the Conference delegation, it had been customary for the host congregation to give free lodging and meals to all delegates at the conventions. By 1900 the Conference had 140 pastors, and most of them were faithful in attending the free conventions. There were 339 congregations, and each was entitled to send one lay delegate. About half of them were represented, on the average, at each convention. Thus the host church was called on to house and feed 250 to 300 people for five to eight days, depending on how much time they took to discuss Conference business.

In the fall of 1900 the Emanuel Church was sufficiently ready so it could be used. The Conference was scheduled to meet in November, and no invitation had been received. The Emanuel congregation offered to take the convention if a small price could be charged for meals. The Conference president, Peter Sjöbom, politely but firmly declined the invitation.[19]

C. A. Hultkrans, superintendent of Bethesda Hospital, appealed to Sjöblom not to cancel the convention because no invitation had come which offered free board and lodging. A special financial appeal was under way in the Conference and Hultkrans said "It will be an incalculable loss to the ingathering if no meeting is held this fall."[20]

The outcome of it was that Emanuel granted the use of its church for the convention, but delegates had to find their own lodging and meals. In these circumstances the delegation was somewhat smaller than usual (88 pastors and 42 laymen), and several important business items were despatched in four days of deliberation, November 14-17. Here, for the first time, the Conference considered the matter of using deaconesses. There was strong opposition on the part of at least one pastor, on the grounds that it would be a step in the direction of woman suffrage in the church. This matter was tabled by the Conference at this convention, but was adopted two years later.[21]

Other items considered by the convention were the financial ingathering to pay Conference debts, cooperation with the Icelandic Synod in support of an Icelandic professor at Gustavus, and a long drawn out battle concerning a disagreement in a little congregation in Canada.

The revolutionary ideas of the Emanuel congregation in asking for a small remuneration in return for meals and lodging, while not successful in 1900, soon began to prevail and were generally accepted in the Conference.

"New Boston" was the name of the area a mile northeast of Emanuel Church, and in this community services were held as early as 1888. This field was served intermittently for a score of years. In 1909 Sunday school was begun, and other branch activities of the congregation. The Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church was organized in 1914.

Emanuel also began mission work in Fridley, and a congregation (now called Redeemer) was organized in 1916. Emanuel also tried to begin mission work in Columbia Heights in the years 1896 to 1898.[22]

At the same time that Minneapolis was growing and spreading into new areas on the north and east it was also extending its residence district southward. A few of the members of the Augustana congregation in the Franklin Avenue area met in Pastor Ternstedt's home on October 31, 1887 and organized the "Swedish Lutheran St. Pauli congregation of Minneapolis." Ternstedt now left the Augustana congregation and became pastor of the new group. Services were held at first in "Tollefson's Hall" at Franklin and 15th. The next year they bought a church at Bloomington and 25th. The Augustana congregation was not pleased with the way the new congregation had started. When St. Pauli asked for admittance to the Conference in 1888 Augustana blocked it. The Executive Committee of the Conference had been trying to iron out the difficulties, but had not succeeded. The controversy was continued in 1889. The church councils of the respective congregations had signed an agreement that St. Pauli should relocate within three years, but the Augustana congregation refused to sanction it, and asked instead that St. Pauli move within one year to some location south of Franklin and east of the Milwaukee railroad. (This would have put the new church at least a mile from Augustana.) But St. Pauli said "we'll decide for ourselves as to location, according to our own convictions." They agreed to forgive Augustana, and if Augustana "feels wounded" because St. Pauli was organized, then "St. Pauli asks for forgiveness." The Conference voted to receive St. Pauli as soon as it would agree to move to another location within five years. At a meeting on March 14, 1889 the congregation agreed to do this.[23]

But the difficulties of St. Pauli were not ended when it was received into the Conference. In 1890 Ternstedt left. The next year the congregation asked Augustana to take over everything, property, debts, and all, but the conditions laid down by Augustana were unacceptable. In 1892 the hard pressed congregation asked the Conference whether it should attempt to continue or should dissolve. The Conference said St. Pauli should continue to exist, and voted aid in the amount of $300.00. Swan Johnson, ordained in 1892, became pastor of St. Pauli and Hopkins, serving for three years, during which lots were secured for a new church at 15th Avenue and 28th Street South. A brighter day began to dawn, but growth in membership at St. Pauli was slow until after 1900. E. O. Stone became pastor of the congregation in 1895 (serving also Hopkins until 1896, and Ebenezer, 1897-1898), and under his leadership the present church was built in 1907. The membership reached the 1,000 mark in 1910. When Stone died in 1930 his congregation had nearly 1,800 members, and was the largest congregation in the Conference. During Stone's pastorate a Sunday school was begun in the home of J. E. Bostrom, 3817 10th Avenue South, later moved to a rented chapel at 39th Street and 10th Avenue. This was the beginning of Calvary Lutheran Church.[24]

Some of the early members of the Augustana congregation lived in the "River Flats" area. A Sunday school was begun, a Ladies' Aid Society was organized and a chapel was built. This chapel was sold in 1889 to a Bohemian Lutheran congregation, and a temporary location was secured on higher ground at 25th Street and 25th Avenue South. Here the Ebenezer congregation was organized in 1892 under Petri's leadership, and the Augustana congregation built a chapel for its new "daughter" at 28th Avenue and 22nd Street (the area to which Augustana had wanted St. Pauli to move in 1889). J. A. Krantz had been called as assistant pastor at Augustana, and was now assigned to take care of Ebenezer. There were frequent changes of pastor until 1899, when P. A. Mattson came and stayed four years. He was succeeded by J. E. Shipp. O. A. Nelson of Emanuel was called to Ebenezer in 1909 and remained until his death in 1926. A new church was built in 1925.[25]

At the same time that Augustana promoted the organization of the Ebenezer Church, it began a similar work in an area farther west, in the vicinity of Nicollet and Lake. Sunday school was held in a rented building. Krantz conducted services in the homes of interested people. The Zion congregation was organized in 1893 at 2920 Pillsbury Avenue, with Petri as chairman of the meeting. Lots for a church were secured at Pillsbury and 33rd, and a church was built in 1895. Krantz continued to serve Zion until 1894, after which J. O. Cavallin became the pastor. When Cavallin left in 1899 the congregation had 167 members. C. O. Olander, who succeeded Cavallin, took a rather dim view of the situation. In a letter to the secretary of the Conference Executive Committee he wrote: "Zion now consists of 27 families and a great many maids, over 100 communicants. If one can work here with seriousness and wisdom this may in time become a self-sustaining congregation. Dr. Trabert is here. The Episcopalians are well organized. The Mission Friends have a 15-year-old Sunday school which had 100 children before we started here. We must try to work with some ungodly remains on a burnt-over field. I, who have never before had any support from the mission treasury in my 24 years as pastor, am uncertain whether it is right to use mission funds for the benefit of very indifferent countrymen in the cities, as long as there are people who want to, but cannot hear God's Word, in the rural communities. But if there is to be a congregation here, there will have to be regular services and regular work, and therefore in the fear of the Lord I shall accept the aid recommended by the district so as to get a sufficient salary in an expensive city."[26]

Olander had rather good success with his "burnt-over" field. When he left in 1908 the membership was above the 400 mark, and no further mission aid was needed. His parish included South Stillwater and Afton until 1900, and Camden Place and Hopkins from 1900 to 1906. After that date Zion constituted a parish by itself.

Since 1909 Zion has had only two pastors: Henry P. Johnson 1909-1927; Daniel T. Martin since 1927. The membership almost doubled during Johnson's pastorate, and has again doubled in Martin's pastorate, being now (1957) 1,413.[27]

As Zion was a result of missionary activity on the part of the Augustana congregation, so Zion in turn became a mother of new missions. Under H. P. Johnson's leadership, services were held in 1910 at the home of Mrs. S. G. Beckstrom, 4036 Zenith Avenue South, and Sunday school was begun the same year at the John Swanson home, 4043 Abbott Avenue South. A church was built in 1915 at Chowen Avenue and W. 46th Street and the Tabor congregation was organized early in 1916.

Four years later H. P. Johnson began to conduct services in the Richfield area, in a vacant building at 5516 Lyndale Avenue South. There the Mount Olivet Lutheran Church was organized in 1921 with 20 communicants and 23 children as charter members. The Tabor congregation was merged with Mt. Olivet in 1930.[28]

C. A. Smith, a prominent and successful Swedish lumber man, established a mill in North Minneapolis in 1887 which soon became the largest of its kind in the nation. Offices were at 44th and Lyndale, near the area known as Camden Place. Among the early residents in the area were Swedish immigrants. Houses were scattered far apart in the community, and Camden Pace was three miles out in the country in 1892 when Rev. J. G. Hultkrans of Bethlehem Church, with two companions, walked through newly fallen snow on a bleak November day to begin mission work among their countrymen. Services were held in the homes the first two years, then occasionally in a Norwegian Lutheran Church, and in C. A. Smith's office building. In 1895 Salem Lutheran Church was organized in the Norwegian Church, which stood at 47th and Colfax. Rev. J. O. Cavallin, pastor of Zion Church, was chairman of the meeting, and Salem became a part of his parish, paying him a salary of $125.00 per year.

The first church, 36 x 24 feet in size, was built at 42nd and Dupont North in 1898. It was enlarged in 1901, and it was razed in 1914 to make way for a new church, which in turn was replaced by the present one in 1954. C. A. Smith was the most generous donor to the erection of the second church, though he was not a member of the congregation.

Salem and Zion constituted a parish until 1906, when Salem called August Samuelson as its first resident pastor. There were then 112 members. When he left in 1916 there were 294.

During the pastorate of Rudolph Peterson, 1922-1943, and Reuben C. Anderson, since 1943, the congregation has had a steady increase in membership, and numbers now (1957) 2,192 baptized members.[29]

A separate chapter in this book is devoted to the story of the language transition in the Minnesota Conference. In that chapter an account is given of the events that led to the calling of Rev. John Telleen as English missionary in the Conference. This was in 1902. He conducted services at J. G. Holmstrom's boardinghouse on Cedar Avenue, near Third Street (two blocks south of Washington Square, then known as Seven Corners). At this place he organized Grace Lutheran Church in 1903, with seven charter members. One of the seven "corners" became the site of the original Grace Church, built in 1904. The building is still there and has the sign "Upholstery." For this mission project C. A. Smith gave about $10,000. Though Smith had come to Minneapolis as an immigrant from Sweden, he had become Americanized quickly. He worked for a time for Governor Pillsbury, and the governor encouraged and helped him to go to school. He was one of the first Swedes to attend the University of Minnesota.[30]

The indifference, not to say hostility, towards English mission work on the part of the Swedish churches in Minneapolis was not easily overcome. Grace congregation prospered slowly. Telleen resigned in 1905. Grace Church was vacant for a year, after which A. T. Seashore became the pastor, serving until 1911. Olof Lundgren served from 1912 until 1914, and when he left the membership was 139. This included such active laymen as N. P. Benson, head of a large optical firm, Dr. Joshua Larson, professor at Minnesota College, and a few of the professors at the University.

Minnesota College had been established by the Conference in 1904. In 1905 it was located at Harvard and Delaware Streets, Southeast, on the edge of the University campus. To serve the area around the college the Conference established the Sharon Lutheran Church in 1909. The intention was that this should also become a center for Lutheran ministry to University students. The General Council promised aid for this project. Among the members who joined Sharon were Dr. Frank Nelson, president of Minnesota College, Erland Lind, a prominent attorney, Dr. A. A. Stomberg, professor of Swedish at the University, and others. Dr. Gustaf Rast was pastor of Sharon, 1910-1913. In January, 1914, Sharon and Grace were united as a parish and called C. A. Wendell as pastor. Soon after he arrived the two congregations merged, Grace Church taking over the property donated to Sharon as a church site at Harvard and Delaware, across from Minnesota College.[31]

Wendell remained as pastor of Grace Church from 1914 until 1946. A church was built in 1916, which was a huge undertaking for the small congregation. At the time of Wendell's retirement the congregation had 632 members. Wendell had become known in wide circles through his ministry to University students as well as in his parish, and a writer and Lyceum lecturer. He was succeeded by James Claypool as pastor of Grace Church. Vincent Hawkinson succeeded Claypool in 1955. The church still continues to render a ministry to students at the University, but the work has far outgrown the capacity of one congregation. The Lutheran Student Foundation of Minnesota has headquarters at 1813 University Avenue Southeast, and also has a building on the St. Paul campus of the University. Grace congregation now (1957) has a membership of 475.[32]

The English language had been used in the First Augustana Church as early as 1892, when a class of catechumens was confirmed in English. Sunday school in English was begun in 1893, and shortly after that date English services were held once or twice a month. In 1908 the congregation decided to ask the Conference for aid in the establishment of an English congregation. Under Petri's leadership the Messiah congregation was organized in September, 1908, with a dozen families as charter members, among whom were Mr. and Mrs. John C. Youngdahl and their children, several of whom have become nationally known in recent years, Luther as governor of Minnesota and Federal judge, Reuben as pastor of Mt. Olivet Church, Ruth as a church leader in Washington, D.C. and a speaker in many places.

C. O. Lundquist became the first resident pastor of Messiah, and the congregation grew to a membership of 455 in 1916 when he resigned. During Lundquist's pastorate the congregation worshipped in a church which had formerly been a Methodist Church, located at 13th Avenue South and 10th Street. In January, 1916 this building was destroyed by fire. The present church at 25th and Columbus was built in 1916, while Samuel M. Miller was pastor. He was succeeded in 1919 by C. Emil Bergquist.

The pastorate of Leonard Kendall in Messiah, 1928-1955, witnessed the growth of the congregation from 822 to 1,838. At the Conference convention in 1953 Kendall was elected vice president. He was re-elected in 1954, and at the retirement of President Emil Swenson in 1955, Kendall was elected to succeed him.

Marbury Anderson became Kendall's successor at Messiah.[33]

When P. A. Mattson was pastor of Ebenezer Church he began to conduct services in the new residential area about ten blocks south of Lake Street, east of the Milwaukee tracks. A chapel was built in 1903 at the present site of Bethany Lutheran Church, 39th Street and 36th Avenue South. Five years later the Bethany congregation was organized under the leadership of A. T. Seashore, pastor of Grace Church, and Bethany became a part of his parish until 1911. The present church was built in 1919.

Carl S. Renius, pastor of Bethany from 1919 to 1934, and Dr. P. A. Mattson began mission work in the area near Minnehaha Park. A former Methodist Church at 40th Avenue South and 52nd Street was purchased, and the Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls was organized in 1923. Trinity has been served by Evald J. Conrad as pastor, 1932-1949 (with Maynard Force as co-pastor 1940-1947) and again since 1954. The membership in 1957 was 1,398.[34]

The Minneapolis congregations all belonged to the St. Paul District until 1910. Immediately after the division had taken place the Minneapolis District established a mission committee. This committee rented a meeting place at 3404 Cedar Avenue South and began the "Cedar Heights Lutheran Mission" with a student, A. T. Floodberg, in charge. C. O. Lundquist, pastor of Messiah, supervised the work and under his leadership the Lebanon Lutheran Church was organized in 1911 in the home of the Nylund family at 3501 Cedar Avenue. A church was built at 21st Avenue South and 36th Street in 1912. Lebanon was united with Bethany as a parish until 1915, and from 1915 to 1918 with Salem, St. Paul. Hugo Thorene served as pastor of Lebanon from 1926 to 1952. The congregation had a membership of 914 in 1957.[35]

After J. G. Hultkrans had resigned from Bethlehem in the spring of 1912 a group of about 75 Bethlehem members organized a new congregation and called him as their pastor. This was the Bethel congregation, organized in the P. O. Peterson home at 3211 Lyndale Avenue North. Because of dissatisfaction on the part of Bethlehem the Conference refused to admit Bethel to its membership in 1913, but the problems were solved the following year. In the meantime a chapel had been built at 30th and Emerson North. A new church was built at the same site in 1929, during the pastorate of Oscar Sandahl. The membership of the congregation now (1957) is 918.[36]

Reference has been made above to the beginning of mission work in "New Boston" by the Emanuel Church. As a result the Gustavus Adolphus congregation was organized in a chapel which Emanuel had bought, at 27th Avenue and Lincoln Street Northeast. This organization took place in 1914 under the leadership of O. A. Elmquist, pastor at Emanuel. The chapel was given to the new congregation, and 28 communicants and 26 children were transferred from Emanuel to Gustavus Adolphus. A church was built in 1937 on the site of the chapel. The congregation then had 410 members. The latest figures (1957) show a membership of 1,900.[37]

The largest Lutheran congregation in the United States is Mt. Olivet in Minneapolis, which in 1957 had 8,934 members. It owes its origin to the missionary efforts of Rev. H. P. Johnson of Zion Church. Olaf Serley, C. A. Bloomquist, Jacob Andresen, and Randall Riketson had asked his aid in the matter of organizing a congregation. Beginning in 1920 with a membership of 20 communicants and 23 children in a vacant farm building, with borrowed equipment, it increased to 281 members in its first decade. The old Richfield post office was bought and used as a chapel until a better building was erected in 1923. Rev. L. B. Benson, the Church's field secretary for home missions, led the congregation in its early years, together with H. P. Johnson. G. P. Williams became the pastor in 1922. He was succeeded by Julius Lorimer. Clarence T. Nelson served as pastor from 1929 to 1933, and Edgar M. Carlson from 1933 to 1937. By that time the membership had increased to 334. In 1938 Reuben Youngdahl came to Mt. Olivet. Five years later there were 1,378 members. In 1950 the 5,000 mark was reached and surpassed, and the rapid growth has continued. An associate pastor, Richard Hillstrom, was called in 1947. At the present time

(1957) three full time pastors and one retired pastor are on the staff, besides 15 other full time workers.[38]

A new church was built in 1939 on West 50th Street, but it soon was found to be inadequate to the needs. The present Mt. Olivet Church, across the street from the former one, was built in 1948 at the cost of more than half a million dollars. Parish house, educational facilities, offices, and other church property have been added, besides camp property at Caribou Lake, on the North Shore of Lake Superior, all now valued at about one and a half million dollars.

Calvary Lutheran Church, begun as a mission by St. Paul's in 1911, was organized in 1923 with a nucleus of 168 members who were transferred from the mother church. The chapel which had been erected at 39th and Chicago was given to the new congregation. At the same location a church was built in 1930. Clarence O. Granlund, who became the pastor of the congregation in 1923, served until 1945, and during his pastorate the membership reached 1,400. Great emphasis was laid on giving to benevolences, especially foreign missions, and in the year when Granlund resigned the congregation gave $15.11 per communicant member to the general work of the church, the highest of any congregation in the Conference, and 88 per cent above the average in the Conference. The same trend has continued under the succeeding pastors, Rudolph Burke and A. B. Walfrid. In 1956 Calvary contributed $24.46 per communicant to the general work, compared with an average of $12.53 in the Conference. It is also worthy of notice that Calvary congregation has sent 33 of its members into the ministry and 25 into overseas missions in the 35 years since it was organized.[39]

Rev. Elof Carlson, pastor of Bethel Church, began a mission at 38th Avenue North and Sheridan in 1924. A chapel was built and a Sunday school was started. The Executive Committee appropriated money to pay the salary of a student who served the field. Circumstances made it necessary for the Executive Committee to buy the property, in order not to lose the field. The Hebron Lutheran Church was organized in 1925. The name was changed the following year to Luther Memorial Church, A. Andre was the pastor, serving also Robbinsdale.

Carl O. Nelson served Luther Memorial from 1940 to 1955. The congregation now (1957) has 1,002 members. Melvin Briere is the present pastor.[40]

The Executive Committee of the Conference reported in 1926 that a new field for Sunday school work had recently been opened at 52nd Avenue North and Dupont. Pastors Emil Swenson and Rudolph Peterson had sponsored the undertaking with some financial help from the Conference for a place in which to meet. A schoolhouse was bought at auction and moved to the lots that had been purchased. This was the beginning of Hope Lutheran Church, which was organized in 1928 by P. A. Mattson. After rather slow development through the thirties the congregation has grown more rapidly since the World War II era, when the defense industries on the north edge of the city brought about a mushroom growth of the residential areas adjacent to the church. From 1943 to 1957 the membership of Hope has increased almost fivefold, from 337 to 1,514. The most rapid growth has taken place in the years 1955-1957. Roger E. Carlson is the present pastor.[41]

From the time of the organization of Hope in 1928 no new congregation was begun in Minneapolis for 12 years. There were 18 Augustana congregations in the city. Depression years, beginning with the stock market crash in 1929, caused a severe slowing down in business and employment, and consequently in church income. The Conference found it necessary to discontinue Minnesota College in 1931. Tabor congregation was merged with Mt. Olivet in 1930. The other congregations and institutions maintained their work, but home mission funds of the Conference were at a low figure. In 1933 the Executive Committee reported: "The reduction of the budget for Home Missions by $10,000.00 necessitated a retrenchment in many fields as well as reduction in salaries of 15 per cent to all workers. With reduced appropriations and decrease in number of workers, it has been impossible to expand the scope of the work on the Home Field."[42]

In 1937 the Conference voted by the close margin of 98 to 92 to favor the consolidation of all home mission work of the Augustana Synod under the direction of one Board. For more than half a century the Minnesota Conference had carried on the mission work in its own area, and many felt that this matter was a sort of "states' right" proposition, to be jealously guarded and maintained. Except for the eloquent and fervent plea made on the Conference floor in First Lutheran Church, St. Paul by Dr. P. O. Bersell, president of the Synod, the new plan might have been voted down by the Conference. Even though all the other conferences had favored it, success would have been a very doubtful prospect if Minnesota, the largest Conference, had turned it down.[43]

The first project of the synodical Board of Home Missions after its organization in 1938 was the fresh start made in Washington, D.C., to provide an aggressive program in place of the almost defunct church then existing. The first wholly new mission project of the new board was the establishment of the Diamond Lake Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, the first post-depression Augustana congregation in the Twin Cities. It was organized on March 28, 1940. A preliminary survey had been made under the direction of Rev. Carl G. Anderson, regional director, which revealed "one of the largest and most promising opportunities we have ever had as a Synod." [44]

Theodore A. Johnstone became the first resident pastor. When he left in 1942 the congregation had a membership of 168, and had built a small chapel on the shore of Diamond Lake, at Portland Avenue and 58th Street. Gordon C. Bergin has been the pastor since 1942. A church was built in 1949. By that time the membership had grown to 901. In 1957 it had more than doubled again, to 2,023.

In the meantime the residential areas were pushing rapidly southward, beyond the city limits into the suburban areas of Richfield and Bloomington. The need for a new congregation in that area had been apparent for several years, and House of Prayer Church was organized in 1953. The Board of American Missions had bought a tract of land for a church site at 76th and Chicago. House of Prayer was organized with 314 communicant members and 431 children. More than 130 of the members came from Diamond Lake on transfer to the new congregation.[45]

Rev. Richard J. Bingea served as Board missionary to aid in organizing House of Prayer and has continued as pastor since the congregation was established. Under his leadership the first unit of the church plant was built in 1955. The congregation had a more rapid growth than any other Augustana congregation, reaching a membership of nearly 1,200 in the first year of its history, and nearly 2,500 in the first three years. Sunday school enrollment reached almost 1,300.[46]

The Board of American Missions investigated the possibilities of a new field in Edina, beginning with a survey in 1948 conducted by 25 teams of students from the Lutheran Bible Institute. Rev. Donald C. Carlson was called as Board Missionary in 1950 and the Normandale congregation was organized. The first building project was begun the following year on a site previously purchased by the Board at Normandale and Valley View. Carlson has continued as pastor, and the membership at present (1957) is 806.[47]

The older suburban areas around Minneapolis, particularly Hopkins, attracted Swedish immigrants who sought employment in the threshing machine factories which were begun in the 1880's. Among the earliest of the Swedish residents were the Andrew Olson family, who had lived for some years in Carver County. They were the leaders in efforts to establish a Lutheran church in Hopkins. One of the Olson daughters later became the wife of P. A. Mattson, College president and Conference president, another one became the wife of E. O. Stone, pastor in Minneapolis.

The Gethsemane Lutheran Church of Hopkins was organized in 1890 under the leadership of C. J. Petri of First Augustana. In the first 35 years of its history the Hopkins congregation was served by 16 different pastors or vice pastors, and 13 students or lay preachers. By that time (1925) the membership was 337. From that time the changes in leadership have been less frequent. By 1943 the congregation had a membership of 755. Since 1943 Lasse J. Stohl has been the pastor and the membership has increased to 2,709 in 1957.[48]

An attempt was made to begin work in St. Louis Park in 1924. A congregation was organized by P. A. Mattson, the Conference president, but it lived only three years. Three decades passed by before a new start was made in St. Louis Park. The Lutheran Church of the Reformation was organized in 1957 under the leadership of the Board of American Missions. Dr. P. O. Bersell served as interim pastor. Rev. H. E. Soderberg became the first resident pastor.[49]

About the same time a congregation was established in the new suburb of Glen Lake, southwest of Hopkins. With Rev. Robert E.

Warren as Board Missionary the All Saints Lutheran Church of Glen Lake was organized in 1957. About 225 of the charter members of the new congregations in St. Louis Park and Glen Lake were received by transfer from Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Hopkins.[50]

After some preliminary mission work by J. G. Hultkrans, Dr. P. A. Mattson organized the Elim Lutheran Church of Robbinsdale in 1922. It had slow growth and a tenuous hold on life for a number of years. Carl O. Swan was the pastor from 1935 to 1943, and when he resigned the congregation had grown to a membership of 237. Under the leadership of C. Ward Nerothin since 1944 the membership increased to 2,737 in 1957.[51]

Anoka, 20 miles northwest of Minneapolis, where the Rum River flows into the Mississippi, was originally a sawmill town. Swedish immigrants settled there as early as the 1860's and Lutheran ministers visited them occasionally. A student serving in Minneapolis, J. G. Sjoquist, organized a congregation in 1870, called the Swedish Lutheran Church, but a reorganization took place in 1871 with Rev. Jonas Auslund in charge. Because of frequent changes in pastoral leadership, and the lack of a resident pastor during the first 50 years of the congregation's existence, its development was slow. In 1921 there were 92 members.

The turning point came in the fall of 1921, when Rev. C. M. Olander, the Synod's travelling missionary, visited Anoka and found a strong desire to change to English. Thereupon P. A. Mattson and Rev. E. J. Sakrison canvassed the city and the community with the purpose in mind of ascertaining what could be done if English would be used exclusively. They found 54 communicants and 23 children who were ready to join immediately, which nearly doubled the size of the congregation. The name was changed to Zion Lutheran Church.[52]

John P. Milton, now professor at Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, became the first resident pastor after the language transition, serving from 1923 until 1926. During these years the membership doubled, and continued to increase in subsequent years. During the pastorate of Adolph W. Dickhart, 1932-1938, the Anoka-Silver Creek-Big Lake parish was dissolved, giving Anoka the full time services of its pastor. By 1940 there were 543 members. Armour Edberg became the pastor in 1944. He served until 1956, and saw rapid growth in the city and in the congregation. A new church was built in 1953, replacing the 80-year-old frame building that had become outgrown and inadequate. In 1956 there were 1,750 members in the congregation. The present pastor (1957) is William J. Hyllengren. [53]

The Minneapolis District has at times included several rural congregations, some of them as far away as 50 miles from the city. These were Princeton, Greenbush, Zimmerman, Monticello, Big Lake, Silver Creek, and Ham Lake. Only Ham Lake now remains in the Minneapolis District, but the name has been changed to Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Soderville. It is located in Anoka County, 12 miles east of Anoka, about 20 miles from downtown Minneapolis. The congregation was organized in 1872 by Jonas Auslund. Fifty years later it had 211 members, and stayed close to this figure until 1954, when Ralph R. Van Loon became the pastor. In three years the membership jumped from 249 to 493.[54]

Reference has been made previously in this chapter to the beginnings of mission work in Fridley. Under the leadership of Rev. O. A. Elmquist, of Emanuel Church, a Ladies' Aid Society was organized in 1911. This group gathered funds for a chapel which was built in 1914. The Redeemer congregation was organized in 1916, and Samuel M. Miller became the first pastor while also serving as pastor of Messiah, until 1919, then as dean of the Lutheran Bible Institute. Miller served Fridley until 1926. During the next score of years it was vacant a large part of the time. In 1947 when Emerson Urelius became pastor of the congregation, there were 291 members. When he resigned in 1957 there were 833.[55]

St. Anthony Village is a suburb of Minneapolis, on the northeast side of the city, with a population of about 3,000 in 1957. The Board of American Missions organized a congregation there early in 1957, the Nativity Lutheran Church. It is the only Lutheran Church in St. Anthony Village, and the second Protestant church. Richard Lofgren had been called as Board Missionary, and became the first pastor. Of the 203 charter members, a large number came from the Emanuel and the Gustavus Adolphus congregations.[56]

From the time of the establishment of the Minneapolis District in 1909 it included some small congregations to the north, which since then have been transferred to other districts.

Saron, Big Lake, organized in 1892 by A. F. Tornell, was transferred to the Cokato District in 1941. Silver Creek, near Kingston, organized in 1890 by P. A. Wenner, was also transferred to the Cokato District in 1941. Zion, Monticello, organized in 1873 by Tornell, had dwindled down to four members in 1934 and was dissolved. A new congregation, Trinity, was organized in Monticello by the Board of American Missions in 1947. It has grown to a membership of 275, and is in the Cokato District.

The Trinity (originally Emanuel) Lutheran Church of Princeton, organized in 1904 by E. O. Stone, and Sharon, Greenbush, Sherburne County, organized in 1900 by J. A. Johnson, were transferred in 1931 to the St. Cloud District, which now is part of the Mille Lacs District.

The Livonia congregation, organized in 1898 at Zimmerman in Sherburne County, was dissolved in 1944.[57]

A century ago the Lutheran Minnesota Conference had nothing in Minneapolis. One Swedish Lutheran pastor, Peter Carlson, had paid a visit to the new little town at the Falls of St. Anthony, but had found no Swedes.

Ninety years ago the Conference had one congregation in Minneapolis, and it was small, without property except a lot, heavily mortgaged, with no regular pastoral services.

Eighty years ago there were two congregations, with a total of about 600 members. Each congregation had a frame church. Only one had a pastor.

Seventy years ago there were four congregations, having a total membership of 1,672, served by four pastors, and with property valued at $72,500. One congregation was using English exclusively.

Sixty years ago there were eight congregations (including Hopkins), with a total membership of 3,513. These were served by five pastors. Property value totalled $83,958.00. One congregation had begun to organize social mission work. All the congregations had Sunday schools, with a total of 1,658 pupils. Weekday school was conducted, as much as 16 weeks in one congregation, 12 weeks in another.

Fifty years ago there were 12 congregations (including Hopkins, Anoka, and Ham Lake) with a total of 5,635 members, 2,666 Sunday school pupils, nine pastors. Seven of the congregations had week day school, the longest period being 12 weeks. Property value totalled $181,671.00. The Conference had a college in Minneapolis.

Forty years ago the Minneapolis District consisted of 24 congregations, with 8,541 members, served by 15 pastors. Church property values were $389,045.00. Sunday school enrollment was 3,637. Week day school was held in 12 congregations, with six weeks the longest period.

Thirty years ago there were 29 congregations, with a total of 11,513 members, served by 21 pastors. Only one of the congregations had no church building, 15 of them owned parsonages. Total property value was $712,764.00. Sunday school enrollment was 4,626. Eleven congregations had week day school, one term being 31 days in length.

Twenty years ago the Minneapolis District had 26 congregations, with a total of 16,596 members, served by 24 pastors. There were 5,686 pupils in Sunday school. Week day school was held in all but two congregations, and one congregation reported 80 days of such school, which evidently was not full days, but an hour or two each day. Property values were $994,537.00. Total contributions for the year were $264,768.54. The Conference had no college in Minneapolis, but still owned the property once owned by the college.

Ten years ago there were 25 congregations in the District, with a total of 28,374 members, 25 pastors, 9,569 Sunday school children, and all but one congregation had week day school. One congregation had such school for 203 hours, another 183. Value of church property in the district was $1,894,752.00. The Conference had sold its former College property, and had acquired a building for office headquarters.

As this is being written, statistics for January 1, 1958 are not available, but it seems probable that the 30 congregations will report a total of more than 50,000 members, 35 pastors, nearly 20,000 Sunday school pupils (including Cradle Roll), and property values totalling more than $8,000,000.00.

NOTES

[1] Hudson, Horace B., *A Half Century of Minneapolis* (1908) 44

[2] *U. S. Census Reports* for the respective years; *Minn. Conf.* Statistical reports for the respective years; *Churches and Church Membership in the United States,* NCCUSA, Series C, No. 14 and 19. The figures in the NCCUSA report are based on the Yearbook of *American Churches* for 1953.

[3] Hudson, Horace B., *op. cit.*, 45.

[4] Jenks, Albert Ernest, "The People of Minnesota" in *Papers and Proceedings of the Second Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Academy of Social Sciences,* Vol. II, No. 2 (1909) 206.

[5] Hudson, Horace B., *op. cit.*, 62, 67f.

[6] Hudson, Horace B., *op. cit.*, 86, 186; Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och Dess Förs. Historia,* I, 478ff.

[7] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 485ff.; *Minnes-Album, Svenska Lutherska Augustana-Församlingen i Minneapolis* (1906) 43ff.

[8] *The Advance,* V, No. 4, July, 1946, 4; *Fifty Years of Service in the Christian Inner Mission Cause in Minneapolis* (Pamphlet)

[9] *The Golden Jubilee of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn.* 1924, 3ff.

[10] *Skaffaren,* August 7, 1889.

[11] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 161f.; Oscar Sandahl was ordained to the ministry in 1908 and served as pastor in Center City, Minneapolis (Bethel) and the Spring Garden parish, Cannon Falls. B. A. Lindgren became a prominent business man in Minneapolis and an active lay leader in the church.

[12] Eckman, F. M., "Augustana-Synodens Kina-Mission" in *Korsbaneret* 1910, 94ff; Olson, Oscar N., *The Augustana Lutheran Church in America,* 79f.

[13] J. G. Hultkrans to P. Sjöblom, 1900 MS.

[14] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* 1902.

[15] *Ibid,* 1904

[16] The files on this case, correspondence concerning it, and newspaper clippings are in the Minnesota Conference archives at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota.

[17] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 494ff.

[18] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* statistical reports.

[19] P. Sjöblom to O. A. Nelson, Oct. 24, 1900 MS.

[20] C. A. Hultkrans to P. Sjöblom, Oct. 23, 1900 MS.

[21] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* 1900, 1902; L. G. Almen to P. Sjöblom, Jan. 29, 1900 MS.

[22] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 496ff.

[23] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* 1888, 1889; *Sv. Lutherska St. Pauli-Förs. Minnes-Album* 1887-1912.

[24] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 500ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* statistical reports.

[25] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 483, 502ff.

[26] *Minnesskrift 1893-1918, Sv. ev. Luth. Zionsförsamlingen i Minneapolis;* C. O. Olander to "Border Lundberg," July 10, 1900 MS.

[27] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* statistical reports.

[28] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 507, 545f., 548f.

[29] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 508ff.; *Korsbaneret* 1927, 315ff.; *40th Anniversary, Salem Lutheran Church,* 1935.

[30] Nelson, O. N., *History of the Scandinavians and Successful Scandinavians in the U. S.* (1901), I, 490; *Korsbaneret,* 1927, 316.

[31] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 148, 512ff.

[32] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical reports.

[33] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 516ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical reports.

[34] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 518ff.; *Christ Our Life, 25th Anniversary, Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls.*

[35] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 520ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical reports.

[36] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 523f.

[37] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 543f.

[38] *25th Anniversary Year, Mount Olivet Lutheran Church.*

[39] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 550; *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* statistical reports.

[40] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* 1925, 40.

[41] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* 1926, 46; Statistical reports.

[42] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* 1933, 28.
[43] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* 1938, 44.
[44] *Aug. Synod Minutes,* 1940, 112; *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* 1940, 48.
[45] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* 1954, 70; *The Advance,* January, 1954, 4.
[46] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* statistical reports.
[47] *The Advance,* July, 1950.
[48] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.,* I, 525ff.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* statistical reports.
[49] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.,* I, 528; *The Advance,* July-August, 1957.
[50] *The Advance,* July-August, 1957.
[51] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical reports.
[52] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.,* I, 528; *Minn. Stats-Tidning,* Nov. 9, 1921.
[53] *Minn. Conf. Minutes.*
[54] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.,* I, 532f.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical reports.
[55] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.,* I, 547f.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical reports.
[56] *The Advance,* March-April, 1957, 6; July-August, 1957, 4.
[57] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Statistical reports.

Chapter XIV

From Rural To Urban

The pioneer home missionary generally thought of his task as being to minister to "our own people"—the Swedish immigrants and their children. This seemed entirely logical and obvious, and consistent with principles of Christian missions as long as Swedish immigrants were pouring into America in a continuous stream and the Swedish language was used in daily life and in worship.

Of the Swedish immigrants to the United States before 1900, about 90 per cent were from rural areas in Sweden. Some had been land owners, but a great many were sons and daughters of the hard working cotters. In Sweden their hope of a better and easier existence was slim. America was "the promised land," where even the poor man could have hope of living under his own roof, plowing and planting his own broad acres, harvesting and selling his wheat and potatoes, keeping his own herd of cattle and his flock of chickens. Here they could live their lives and raise their families under the banner that typified freedom.

Not all settled on the land. Young men found work as lumberjacks, on railroad construction work, in the building industries. Young women became cooks and maids in the homes of the more wealthy in the cities.

To all these varied groups the Minnesota Conference churches and pastors tried to minister. The task always seemed too great for the resources.

In 1875 the congregations of the Minnesota Conference were found in 28 counties in Minnesota, four counties in Wisconsin, and two in

South Dakota. The heaviest concentration of Swedish people was in Chisago, Goodhue, Washington, Carver, and Nicollet counties, in Minnesota.[1]

As the influx of Swedish immigrants rose to its highest peak in the eighties and nineties, the older settlements became filled to the saturation point, and overflowed in various directions, chiefly westward and northward. By the year 1900 the Minnesota Conference had 399 congregations, with 38,305 communicant members, served by 140 pastors. These congregations were located in 66 counties in Minnesota, 12 counties in western Wisconsin, 12 counties in North Dakota, 16 counties in South Dakota, and in four Canadian provinces.[2]

When we consider that the Swedish immigrants sought opportunities for farming, it seems rather strange that several counties in southern Minnesota have no congregations belonging to the Minnesota Conference. These are Rock, Pipestone, Jackson, Faribault, Fillmore, Mower, Houston, Winona, Olmsted, Dodge, Steele, and McLeod. (Freeborn has one small congregation.) In the entire area south of the Minnesota River—22 counties containing some of the finest agricultural land in the world—the Minnesota Conference has only 40 congregations and of these, only 31 are rural, with 6,300 communicant members, or less than six per cent of the total membership of the Conference.

Of the total rural strength of the Minnesota Conference today, approximately 15 per cent is south of the Minnesota River, 85 per cent north of that valley.[3]

The specific factors that influenced the direction of the immigrant stream are many and complex. It has often been said that the Swedes chose the wooded areas and the lake regions because this was the sort of "romantic" landscape that reminded them of their homeland. Fredrika Bremer, writing in 1850 on her trip to Minnesota, predicted that it would be "just the country for a new Scandinavia . . . Here would the Swede find again his clear, romantic lakes, the plains of Scandia rich in corn, and the valleys of Norrland . . ." [4]

Whether Miss Bremer's book directly influenced many of her countrymen to set out for Minnesota would be difficult to say. But it is a well known fact that others felt the same as she did about Minnesota's lakes and wooded hillsides.

In 1902 a monument was erected near Scandia to mark the site of the first Swedish settlers' cabin in Minnesota, built in 1850. At the dedication of this monument, Dr. Eric Norelius said:

"In 1850 I saw in Moline, Illinois the families who became the first Swedish families to go to Minnesota and settle in these regions, and I remember well their appearance, their economic situation, and their wishes concerning a suitable place to live in the new world. It was there in Moline that we first heard Minnesota mentioned, and we tried to find out what sort of country this was. Several unmarried young men had gone up here in the fall of 1850 and among these there was a former sheriff's officer named Norberg, who wrote to some friends in Moline and reported what kind of land he had found in these regions. He emphasized the fact that here were forests, lakes, and streams, plenty of fish and game, and good soil—and a healthful climate. This description suited the taste of these Norrland families." [5]

An old pastor who had been in America twenty-five years gave expression to his feelings in these words after spending a day at a new Swedish settlement on the south shore of Mille Lacs Lake in 1896:

"The soughing of the wind in the majestic fir trees stirs my memory of our old, beloved fatherland, and never has any place in this country had such an effect on my mind as just this place, for at times I seem to have been transported back to the green forests of my childhood home, and if the twittering of birds were intermingled with the soft soughing of the forest the illusion would be complete." [6]

A nostalgic love for the lakes and the wind in the trees undoubtedly was a factor in the immigrant's choice of a place for his new home, but certain other factors were probably more important. Minnesota conducted a very active campaign for immigrants beginning in territorial days. From 1867 to 1876 Hans Mattson—founder of the Vasa settlement—was a leader in the campaign, part of the time as secretary of Minnesota's Board of Immigration, and at times also in the employ of the St. Paul and Pacific Railway Company (now a part of the Great Northern) and later of the Northern Pacific. He wrote a number of pamphlets for distribution to immigrants. He wrote for the foreign language press in America, and for the papers in European countries. He made several visits to Sweden and spoke to large gatherings.

Paul Hjelm-Hansen, a Norwegian journalist, was instrumental in bringing large numbers of Scandinavian settlers to the Red River Valley.[7]

After a considerable number of Swedes had settled in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and northern Wisconsin it was but natural that the channel of immigration was worn deeper, as satisfied farmers wrote to the editors of Swedish papers telling of the land they had found, the healthful climate, the neighbors, the church, and as they wrote to relatives and friends urging them to come, sending them money for the journey, offering them a home and a job when they came.[8]

In a few instances the dramatic opening of new industries, particularly the iron mines of the Vermilion and Mesabi ranges, was the signal for Swedes to come to Minnesota.

At various times the Conference has been directly or indirectly involved in colonization projects which have had as their aim the settlement of Swedish farmers in specific communities, in order to make it possible to build up strong congregations.

A. P. Monten, pastor of First Lutheran Church, St. Paul, and others founded "The Swedish Colonization Bureau" in 1881. Large display advertisements appeared in "Minnesota Stats Tidning," the first one in the issue of June 9. Herman Stockenstrom was listed as manager. The advertisement announced land available in three main areas: Forest land east of the Mississippi River, 180,000 acres at $2.00-$6.00 per acre; part forested in Meeker, Kandiyohi, Stearns, Todd, Pope, Douglas, and Ottertail counties, 365,000 acres at $5.00 and up; prairie land in Swift, Stearns, Big Stone, Grant, Traverse, Wilkin, Clay, Polk, Marshall, and Kittson counties (no mention of acreage available or price).

This was the period of heaviest immigration into Minnesota and the Dakotas. A newspaper report in 1881 states that 50,000 immigrants had arrived in Minnesota in 1879-1880.[9]

Another report states that in ten days 1,049 bona fide settlers had gone out along the Northern Pacific line, with 350 on their way to Fargo, others to Little Falls, Brainerd, Aitkin, Hawley, Perham, Detroit, Lake Park, Verndale, Moorhead, Wadena, Casselton, New Buffalo, Tower City, Valley City, Jamestown.[10]

At. U. S. Land Offices in Minnesota and Dakota during July, 1880, over 1,000 entries on land were made, including 152,867 acres. Besides this, 200,000 acres were sold. From January 1 to August 1 more than one million acres were taken.[11]

Kittson County, the northwestern corner of Minnesota, was being settled rapidly. A news item in the spring of 1880 says: "30,000 acres will be plowed in Kittson County this spring. All railroad land is taken, but good government land is available from four to six miles from town."[12]

About 25 Scandinavian newspapermen were taken on an excursion over the Northern Pacific Railroad in August, 1880. They went to the end of the track at Green River in the vicinity of the present town of Dickinson, North Dakota. They reported that "Moorhead has a population of 1,400, of whom one-third are Scandinavians" and that the largest farm owned by a Swede was that belonging to O. A. Sanderson, four miles from Fargo, with 800 acres, of which 600 acres are in grain.[13]

Although the "Swedish Colonization Bureau" was a private venture, and not a Conference project, it brought about difficulties for the Conference because of disagreement between Monten, Stockenstrom, Norelius, and Sjöblom, not so much concerning the Colonization Bureau itself as the Swedish newspapers which became involved in fierce competition, and also personal matters and various accusations that threatened for a time to disrupt the Minnesota Conference.[14]

However, the Conference not only survived the personal and journalistic feuds, but was strengthened by the influx of more settlers attracted to the central and northwestern parts of Minnesota through the offer of land along the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific.

In the nineties Monten was engaged in a colonization project in another part of the Conference. While serving as pastor in Superior, Wisconsin (1888-1898), he advised unemployed members of his congregation to start a new colony. Through the Land Commissioner of Minnesota, Mr. Clark, arrangements were made for a new settlement in Carlton County, near Mahtowa. A new station was established, and though Mr. Clark had wanted it named Monten, the pastor would not permit his name to be thus used, and the town became Atkinson.

Two congregations—Salem, Mahtowa, and Bethel, Atkinson—came into existence as a result of this venture.[15]

Officially the Conference began to work on colonization in 1902, when it adopted this resolution: "Resolved, that the Executive Committee, by means of a standing notice in the papers direct landseekers among our people to counsel with well known laymen or the pastors of the Conference or missionaries in the places where landseekers intend to settle." [16]

The following year the Conference urged travelling missionaries to labor for the establishment of new colonies.[17]

The Executive Committee reported in 1904 that the attempts to colonize by those means were impractical if not impossible, and that the best method would be the establishment of a stock company in which interested persons could invest. In order to gain the recommendation and good will of the Conference the company would have to abide by rules stipulated by the Executive Committee: As far as possible to sell land only to Augustana members; to sell at the lowest possible prices; to use Christian principles in their dealings; not to mix into church activities except procuring of land for churches, parsonages, church institutions, and cemeteries. In accordance with these regulations a company had been organized in Minneapolis.[18]

No further mention of the matter seems to be found until in 1913, when Gust Ristrom, a lay delegate from Gascoyne, North Dakota, moved that district delegates meet to form state colonization associations, and that state delegations meet to form a Synod-wide association. The committee elected to carry out the plan consisted of Dr. Frank Nelson for Minnesota, Rev. C. J. Collin for Wisconsin, Rev. C. E. Cesander for South Dakota, Rev. J. B. Sorenson for North Dakota, and Rev. J. G. Dahlberg for Canada. The Conference stipulated that it assumed no financial obligations in connection with this project. Rev. A. P. Monten reported that he had contacted the land commissioner of the Soo Line Railroad regarding Swedish colonization. He was urged to work in consultation with the Executive Committee.[19]

The Augustana Colonization Association was organized in Chicago on July 11-12, 1913, with 35 representatives present from 16 states. Those from the Minnesota Conference were: Mr. Henning Ivarson, Minneapolis; Dr. Frank Nelson, Minneapolis; Rev. J. G, Hultkrans, Minneapolis; Mr. Oscar Lund, Upsala; Mr. August Lundgren, Warren; Rev. P. E. Ording, Nelson; Rev. C. E. Cesander, Sioux Falls, S. D.; Mr. Gust Ristrom, Gascoyne, N. D.; Mr. S. F. Friberg, Gwinner, N. D.; Rev. J. O. Lindquist, Kenora, Ontario; Rev. L. P. Bergstrom, Winnipeg, Manitoba. The constitution adopted at this meeting specified that the purpose of the association was "to gather and keep our people in larger communities and colonies and thereby seek to prevent their dispersion, and to achieve this purpose a central bureau shall be established." [20]

Rev. Cesander was elected president, Mr. Ristrom, vice president, Mr. Ivarson, secretary. Of the six trustees, four were from Minnesota. The trustees elected Mr. Ivarson to serve as "central bureau" until other arrangements were made. His office was at 400 Walnut Street, S.E., Minneapolis.[21]

The Augustana Colonization Association of North America was incorporated in Minnesota in 1914, with capital stock of $150,000. (1,000 shares preferred, 500 shares common.) Interest on capital stock was to be seven per cent, and any profits above that would be divided 75 per cent to stockholders, 25 per cent to the Augustana Synod. By June 1, 1915 the company had sold 300 shares of common stock, but only $7,500.00 had been paid. No preferred stock had been sold. Rev. C. E. Elving of Omaha, Nebraska had become the president and leader.[22]

At the Synod in 1916 Elving reported that 30 families had been helped to buy land in "churchly communities." The Synod also received a report from a committee elected to study the colonization project. The committee gave its endorsement, suggesting that the Association become an agency of the Synod. The Synod voted to give moral support, but felt that it could do no more.[23]

It was not long before the president of the Minnesota Conference was being bombarded by complaints about Elving and the Association, the strongest complaints coming from Gust Ristrom. He stated that the Association which had been incorporated and which had called Elving to his position was not the original group, but a land company, privately owned and operated for private profit, not for the purpose of Swedish Lutheran colonization. Complaints were being filed by farmers who had gone to North Dakota to buy land on the supposition that they were dealing strictly with church people, but found that local land agents were involved who were unscrupulous and reaped huge profits. The Association never did any great amount of business, and Rev. Elving was involved in disagreement with various persons who alleged that they had been cheated. However, he stayed in the Association until 1924, and at the same time served as pastor of Lebanon Lutheran Church, Minneapolis.[24]

The president of the Conference reported in 1918 that he had investigated the complaints in North Dakota, and had found that the Augustana Colonization Association had not been guilty of any dishonesty. However, the Conference, while emphasizing the need of colonization, resolved that it was not to be held responsible for any acts of the Augustana Colonization Association.[25]

Colonization had largely taken its own natural course during the years of immigration from Sweden. In spite of the pleas of church leaders that the Swedes should stay together and form strong colonies, the immigrants scattered, and it became the duty of the church to seek them where they settled. Even before the beginning of World War I immigration from Sweden had fallen off greatly, and by 1918 had practically ceased. It increased somewhat in the twenties, but the Minnesota Conference was becoming an American group, facing new questions and no longer ministering exclusively to "our people."

Though a great deal of effort had been put forth to colonize the Swedish immigrants in rural regions, by official, semi-official, and personal methods and procedures, and though a considerable success had been achieved, the fact is that the three large cities of Minnesota, and the city of Superior, Wisconsin, received the largest concentration of Swedes and their descendants. The following tables show something of the trend towards urbanization.[26]

St. Paul

Year	Total population	Born in Sweden	Per cent of total pop.
1880	41,473	1,897	4.6
1890	133,156	11,787	8.8
1900	163,065	9,852	6.0
1910	214,744	11,335	5.3

Minneapolis

Year	Total population	Born in Sweden	Per cent of total pop.
1880	46,887	3,188	6.8
1890	164,738	19,398	11.8
1900	202,718	20,035	9.9
1910	301,408	26,477	8.8

Duluth

Year	Total population	Born in Sweden	Per cent of total pop.
1880	838	......	..
1890	33,115	4,102	12.4
1900	52,969	5,047	9.5
1910	78,466	7,281	9.3

As early as 1880 more than 5,000 Swedish immigrants were living in St. Paul and Minneapolis. Ten years later the Twin Cities and Duluth had 35,287 Swedish-born residents, or 35.3 per cent of all the Swedish immigrants in Minnesota. In 1900 the figure was down to 34,934, or 30.2 per cent. In 1910 it was up to 45,093, or 38.2 per cent of all Swedish immigrants in the state.

There were several rural counties where the Swedes constituted a very large percentage of the total population, notably Kanabec, with 52.4 per cent, Chisago, with 38.2 per cent, and Isanti, with 36.3 per cent, all in the east central part of the state, and Kittson, the northwestern corner of the state, where 31 per cent of the total population were Swedish immigrants.

Eight counties in southern Minnesota each had less than one per cent Swedish immigrants. Many counties in the central and northern sections had from 10 to 25 per cent. But great numbers of these were scattered among people of other nationalities and only in a comparatively few places were they concentrated into "solidly" Swedish communities. The emphasis in the mission program of the Conference was on the rural regions, but to give all these regions an adequate sort of service was practically impossible, in view of the shortage of pastors and funds.

The Conference had set for itself the task of ministering to the

Swedes. We may ask here, How well did they succeed in this task? In 1890 Minnesota had 99,913 inhabitants who had been born in Sweden, and 50,857 both of whose parents were born in Sweden, a total of 150,770 persons of Swedish stock.[27]

In 1890, the Conference had a total membership of 41,923 in the state of Minnesota.[28]

In 1900 the Swedish stock totalled 211,826. The Minnesota Conference congregations in the state had a membership of 58,166.[29]

In 1910 the Swedish stock in Minnesota had increased to a total of 240,511, and the membership of the Minnesota Conference congregations had grown to 66,332.[30]

While these statistics do not give positive and conclusive evidence as to the success of the Minnesota Conference in its efforts to gather the Swedes into Lutheran congregations, they indicate that there never was a time when as many as one-third of the Swedes in Minnesota belonged to the Conference.

In the largest cities the percentage of Swedes gathered into the Conference was even smaller than the average for the state. As mentioned above, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth had in 1890 a total of 35,287 Swedish born residents. In these cities the Minnesota Conference had then eight congregations (exclusive of the three English Lutheran churches) with a combined membership of 4,330. In 1900 the three cities had 34,934 Swedish-born residents. The Conference then had seven congregations in Minneapolis with a total of 3,699 members; St. Paul had five congregations with a total of 2,332 members; and Duluth had three congregations with a total of 1,261 members; or a total in the three cities of fifteen congregations with 7,292 members. In 1910 the three cities had 45,093 Swedish-born residents. The Minnesota Conference had: In Minneapolis, 11 congregations, 6,002 members; in St. Paul (including South St. Paul), 11 congregations, 4,365 members; in Duluth, three congregations, 1,770 members; totals, 25 congregations, 12,137 members.[31]

In the census years referred to above—1890, 1900, 1910—approximately one-third of the Swedish stock in Minnesota lived in the three largest cities. But of the Minnesota Conference people in 1890 only 10.3 per cent lived in those cities; in 1900, 12.5 per cent; and in 1910, 18.3 per cent.

Why was there a much lower percentage of "success" in the three large cities in view of the fact that the greatest concentration of Swedes was found there? Possible reasons that could be adduced would be many, such as:

Not enough congregations were organized to serve the cities adequately.

The city churches were not Americanized rapidly enough to serve the English-speaking Swedes.

The predominantly rural Conference convention delegates did not favor spending mission funds in the cities.

The city Swedes were not as faithful to the Augustana Synod as their country cousins.

There was more competition for church members in the cities than in the rural Swedish colonies.

The Swedes who settled in the cities were of a different "type," more interested in secular institutions and activities than in the church.

Many of the Swedes in the city were young, unmarried people, who were less apt to join a church than Swedish families in rural areas.

The "community spirit," which helped to foster the church in rural areas, was lacking in the cities.

Much evidence could be cited in proof of each of these suggested reasons for the slower growth in the cities. But the intangibles in the situation are such that it would be impossible to present conclusive statements on the subject. One hesitates to say that the Conference should have put less emphasis on its rural missions and more on the urban during the period of heavy immigration. It is useless to speculate on what the result might have been if a different policy had been followed. Perhaps the Conference "wasted" its meager mission funds and the energy and time of pastors on small, scattered rural congregations that soon vanished from the scene in spite of all, whereas the same money and effort expended in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth could have resulted in strong congregations.

But it is not hard to understand why the people felt and thought as they did. From the beginning the Conference had been deeply involved in the dramatic and powerful movement of land-taking, homesteading, frontier settlement, westward expansion. It seemed natural and obvious that the church must put its mission emphasis on geographical outreach. If a contingent of members from Vasa moved to Oscar Lake, they hoped, of course, that the success story of Vasa would be matched or surpassed. If a group from Chisago Lake moved to Langford, South Dakota, their new settlement was soon to rival the mother colony. In most cases those hopes did not materialize, but we cannot say that the people were fools to entertain such hopes.

Again and again we read in the reports of missionaries and pastors and other individuals that their particular field in the Conference was the most important, the most needy, the most hopeful, the most urgent at the time. The Conference was reminded by its president, Rev. A. Jackson, in 1881, that "a great mission field is open for us in the Red River Valley, and the missionary work there must be prosecuted with all seriousness immediately."[32]

J. H. Randahl, stationed in South Dakota in 1883, wrote in his report to the Conference, "One travelling missionary in an area of 100,000 square miles! In the tremendous stream of immigrants that spreads out over the Dakota plains we find many of our countrymen. Wherever one travels from the Big Sioux Valley to the Black Hills, there are Swedes. What shall become of them? Shall we, can we in the spirit of Cain, push the matter aside and let these wandering brethren perish in spiritual hunger? If we neglect it, others will surely be ready to enter into our task."[33]

Rev. L. A. Hocanzon had visited the Mesabi Range in the spring of 1893 and said: "Five or six new cities have been started in the past three or four months. Among the great mass of people coming daily to these places there are many Swedes, particularly young people."[34]

Rev. P. O. Hanson, working on the Mesabi Range in 1900, reported to the Conference president: "The Mesabi Range is not only the most important but the most difficult mission field."[35]

The same year Rev. Erik Rehner was painting a glowing picture of prospects in Canada: "That Canada has a great future cannot be doubted, and if the Conference will work now with vigor and seriousness among our countrymen who are moving in and who have moved in, then, according to God's promise, the wilderness and the dry land shall rejoice and the desert blossom as a rose."[36]

Other fields were crying for attention at the same time. A report from the St. Paul District (which then included Minneapolis), was read to the Conference at its convention in Cambridge, May 22-29, 1900. This report, signed by Rev. J. G. Hultkrans, district president (pastor of Bethlehem Church, Minneapolis), pictured the conditions in the cities: "Much more work ought to be laid down here than is possible with the manpower now available. We are all working beyond our ability, but very little is being done outside the congregations to interest the indifferent and the wandering, to win them for God's kingdom. We have talked about the advisability of engaging a city missionary, but without any results. There are no funds for it. When we look at the extent of the field and at our meager resources, we shudder and are ready to give up everything or to ask the Conference for helpers in the great work, but the former we may not do and the latter would be no use. When we see the difficulties we shudder still more, for hindrances to successful work are innumerable. Drunkenness and unspeakable immorality flourish and drag thousands down to eternal ruin. Little or nothing is done for these, since none of us has time or ability to try to save these unfortunate people. For their rescue a special home should be established and a special worker be assigned, and thereby many could be saved both for time and eternity. But who can or wants to do this? A similar home should be built for the many thousands of homeless young women who work in the cities, who because of their being homeless are very susceptible to all sorts of temptations that surround them in these populous cities. Conditions are same in both these cities. A small attempt at a young women's home is being made by the Augustana Church [First Augustana, Minneapolis] in the establishment of the Mission Colony, which is under the leadership of Sister Cecelia, but it is altogether too small to be of much help for the whole city, to say nothing of St. Paul, where nothing of the sort has been done. Here the Conference should help, for it is girls from the entire Conference who are here homeless. . . . A great hindrance to progress in mission work is the fact that so many intend to leave the city at the first opportunity to seek a home in the peaceful country. These people do not want to join any congregation, partly because they want to save money, and partly because they are to move. Nevertheless they need spiritual care, and the more we as congregations can do for them the more sure it is that they will join a congregation at the place to which they come later. With these it is a matter of sowing in hope. The societies keep thousands away from our congregation, for when the man is not permitted to belong to a congregation because of our constitution, and this even when his only motive in joining a society is to get the benefit of cheap life insurance, then both the man and his family stay away, and soon the lodge becomes his only church, and the next generation will not seek admission to a Lutheran Church. One congregation here has considered it necessary to change its attitude in this matter, and this will no doubt happen sooner or later in our whole Synod. One thing is sure, we now are losing many otherwise fine and truly good families from the Lutheran church and from the kingdom of God. Another insurmountable obstacle to all church activity in these cities is the prevalence of Sunday work, which is becoming more and more common, and if nothing can be done to stem this evil it will destroy thousands of homes. When the man must, in order to keep his job, work seven days or seven nights each week, there is no time for church either for him or his wife, for in this way they are, willingly or unwillingly, hindered from belonging to church and attending church. We are sorry for these slaves of the money barons. . . . We should have one more pastor in St. Paul, and one more in Minneapolis to care for the field rightly. But this will cost money, and where shall we get it? I have thought that I could this year engage Mr. A. Westlund in my congregation and one other place. We have also called a deaconess, whom we hope to get as soon as possible. . . . What the Conference must do is to place a pastor here for English work. If this is not done we are playing into the hands of the sects and the Synod of the Northwest. . . . There should be one church for the whole city to which we could recommend the people who prefer to hear English rather than Swedish, and especially those who must be confirmed in English. We should have such a church also in St. Paul if we are to hope in the future to keep our young people in the Augustana Synod."[37]

The Conference directed a committee to submit resolutions on the report of the St. Paul District, but when the committee brought in a resolution that the Conference establish English work in the Twin

Cities and place one pastor in each city, the Conference merely referred the whole matter to the St. Paul District and the Executive Committee.

Peter Sjöblom, pastor at Dunnell, was elected Conference president at this convention, and L. G. Almen, Balaton, vice president. The attitude of both regarding mission aid to the cities may be seen in a letter written by Almen to Sjöblom a few weeks after the convention:

"Various circumstances may speak in favor of the arrangements made by the [St. Paul] district, but to ask for aid from the mission treasury when Salem is combined with Bethlehem—such a large congregation—that seems to be asking too much. And if that petition is granted then the Committee's reason for denying the Zion congregation's request, will fall. However, if there are well gounded reasons for assuming that the mission work in the above mentioned congregations is carried on according to God's Word and our constitution, then the Committee has at least one good reason for granting the requests; then, if nothing better can be arranged, I shall not oppose their request. But if the work is carried on in the interests of the secret societies, then, I think, it will be simply impossible to grant any aid to the big cities, for our Christian people who conscientiously desire to abide by God's Word do not under any circumstances desire to further a mission that seeks to unite Christ and Belial." [38]

That there was a feeling of dissatisfaction between rural and urban areas of the Conference was manifested in various ways. There were rural pastors who seemed to feel jealous over the comforts and conveniences of the city pastors, their vacation trips, their generous gifts at surprise parties. Most bitter of all were the suspicions that city pastors compromised with the lodge.

The differences between city and country churches had received official attention in 1894 when Eric Norelius was president of the Conference. In his annual report he said: "In general one is noticing more and more the difference between our congregations in the cities and in the country. As long as this is only an outward difference, resulting from natural circumstances and manifesting itself in different methods and techniques in the externals of church life, there is not much to say about it; but when it is stated that the very essence of

Christianity and the preaching and the care of souls and discipline must be different in city and country, then it is time for us to stop and consider the things that belong to our peace. If it is going to be, as some seem to think, that rural Christianity is not good enough for the cities and city Christianity has no place in the country, then we evidently will have to expect an outward separation. There certainly does not have to be any difference between city and country Christianity; but the fact is that in the cities a far greater resistance is needed to withstand secularism, rationalism and the current of apostasy. If one yields to this mighty current, there will be a difference between Christians who are faithful to the confessions and those who want to suit Christianity to their own taste and desire, whether they live in the country or the city. Where our Savior commanded His disciples to begin in Jerusalem, He has thereby given a suggestion not only as to the tremendous importance of preaching the gospel in the cities, but also, that true, faithful Christianity can be awakened and maintained there."

In consideration of this statement the Conference resolved that it was worthy of notice, and "though we can thank God, that this difference is not yet found among us, it is nevertheless very near us, and the president's remarks should serve as a 'Look Out,' in order that this difference never may arise." [39]

Neither the logical and objective comments of Norelius nor the solemn resolution of the convention delegates that they should take heed could prevent entirely the undercurrent of suspicion and mistrust. The feeling of strangeness between rural and urban people was not confined to the Minnesota Conference. As every student of history and sociology knows, there have always been feelings of mistrust between city and country people, sometimes just a smoldering resentment and occasional outbursts of name-calling, sometimes serious lack of co-operation and, more seriously, class struggle.

In the Minnesota Conference the most unfortunate and tragic result of rural-urban mistrust was that it hampered the home mission work just at the time when the Conference faced its greatest opportunities.

By the turn of the century the Conference had reached out as far as it could go geographically, covering all of Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, western Wisconsin, and the Canadian provinces from Lake Superior to the Rocky Mountains. A total of 339 congregations had been established, and these were being served by 140 pastors. Tremendous gains had been made in the previous 25 years. The time had come for holding and consolidating the gains and to move forward in a more intensive working of the field. The far-flung rural parishes with seven or eight congregations served by one pastor, needed more workers, and particularly pastors who would stay several years. The congregations in the large cities needed to establish new missions, build more churches, recruit more of their own people to win the unchurched. They needed to introduce English more rapidly than before, not by the establishment of one or two all-English churches but by using English as required by the needs in every church.

In some of the smaller cities the Minnesota Conference lost the congregations that had already been started, because of failure to make a successful transition from Swedish to English. Waseca and Fairmont may be cited as examples. A congregation had been organized in Waseca in 1885. Twenty-five years later it still had less than 50 members. In 1921 the pastor (who lived at Vista) wrote concerning the Waseca congregation: "The little group that is here consists of good Lutherans and has held together in a spirit of unity throughout the years." But he also made this comment: "There is not much to say about this place. The Swedes have been so few in number that the congregation has never amounted to very much. It is a German city." Five years later the congregation, numbering only eight members, was dissolved. A similar situation prevailed in Fairmont. In 1924 a pastor reported: "The future of our Lutheran congregation in Fairmont depends on a greater influx of Scandinavians; at present the work is discouraging." The Conference president, Dr. P. A. Mattson, had visited Fairmont that year and preached to a score of people, Swedes, Danes, and Norwegians. He wrote, "There are not many Scandinavians here but they voted to ask Pastor [A. G.] Olson [of East Chain] to visit them as often as he is able to . . ." The congregation had already been dissolved, and was not revived.[40]

For the successful prosecution of the home mission task there was need of mutual understanding and sympathy between city and country, and co-operation for the common welfare of all. However, the unpalatable fact is that many congregations failed to do their duty and the work suffered correspondingly. Many contributed little or nothing to the home mission treasury. This was notoriously true of some of the oldest and largest congregations, both rural and urban. One city congregation of 900 communicants contributed $151.48 in 1899, less than 17 cents per capita. A rural congregation of 725 members, the same year, gave $148.80, or 20 cents per capita. A rural congregation of 270 members gave $20.50, or seven cents per capita. A city congregation with 360 members gave $32.12, or slightly less than nine cents. The Conference resolution at the time required a payment of 35 cents per communicant for missions, which would have meant a total of $12,300.00. Actual receipts were only $7,679.99.[41]

Year after year the story of the home mission treasury was a similar one. Few congregations paid the full amount requested by the Conference. The Executive Committee borrowed money, reduced appropriations to home mission fields, and the treasurer was often months late in paying the salaries of missionaries. This deplorable lack of adequate support for the work was, of course, due to many different things. Newly-arrived immigrants trying to get started on a prairie homestead, or servant girls earning $2.00 a week as maids in city homes had no surplus funds. But by 1900 there were many Swedes both in the country and in the city who owned fine homes and had fairly good incomes. Yet the per capita figure for all local and benevolent giving in 1899 in one of the well established rural congregations was only $4.01, which could hardly be called a notable example of Christian stewardship. The per capita for benevolences was 94 cents. In the Conference as a whole, the per capita for all expenditures in 1900 was $6.20. The per capita for all benevolences was $1.49, for home missions it was 17 cents.

Some who labored on the mission fields for years made great and truly heroic sacrifices. In contrast, the majority of the people did pathetically little to support the cause. One is almost forced to conclude that there was a deep dissatisfaction, a lack of confidence, and general apathy towards the mission work.

NOTES

[1] Computed from the statistical report for the Minnesota Conference.

[2] Computed from the statistical report in *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll* 1900.

[3] Computed from the statistical reports in *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* 1956. Jackson county has had one congregation, but it was merged with a church of another Lutheran body. Mower County and McLeod County each has had one congregation but they have been dissolved.

[4] Bremer, Fredrika, *The Homes of the New World,* 56.

[5] Norelius, E., *Talk given at dedication of the monument commemorating the first Swedish settlement in Minnesota Sept. 18, 1902* (MS. G. A. C.)

[6] Fr. Peterson to A. Jackson (MS) Dec. 15, 1896.

[7] Blegen, Theodore C., "Minnesota's Campaign for Immigrants" in *Yearbook of the Swedish Historical Society of America, 1926,* 3-83. An excellent account of this subject. *Minnesota Stats Tidning,* Jan. 13, 1881, reported that the State Immigration Bureau had published 123,000 brochures.

[8] See "Hemlandet Letters" compiled by George M. Stephenson, in *Yearbook of the Swedish Historical Society of America* VIII, 1922-1923, 56-152; "Letters from Pioneer Days" compiled and edited by Conrad Peterson, in *Yearbook of the Swedish Historical Society of America,* IX, 1923-1924, 45-117.

[9] *Minn. Stats-Tid.* Jan. 13, 1881.

[10] *Minn. Stats-Tid.* March 25, 1880.

[11] *Minn. Stats.-Tid.* Aug. 26, 1880.

[12] *Minn. Stats-Tid.* May 6, 1880 (In March a warning had been published that there was so much snow at Hallock that land seekers should not try to come for six weeks.)

[13] *Minn. Stats-Tid.* Aug. 26 and Sept. 2, 1880.

[14] Johnson, Emeroy, *Eric Norelius,* 193ff.

[15] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och dess Förs. Hist.,* I, 231. Lund's article is based on a letter written by Monten and published in *Minn. Stats-Tid.* Aug. 29, 1923.

[16] *Minn. Konf. Protokoll,* Oct. 21-25, 1902, 10.

[17] *Minn. Konf. Protokoll,* May 12-19, 1903, 41.

[18] *Minn. Konf. Protokoll,* May 17-23, 1904, 42f.

[19] *Minn. Konf. Protokoll,* Feb. 25-Mar. 3, 1913, 112f.

[20] *Referat öfver Organisationsmötet af Augustana-Synodens Kolonisations- förening i Chicago, Illinois, den 11 och 12 juli, 1913* 4ff.

[21] *op cit.,* 9.

[22] *Årsrapport* submitted to Synod in 1915 by Augustana Colonization Association.

[23] Augustana Synod Minutes, 1916, 159ff.

[24] Records of the Augustana Colonization Association of North America are at the Minnesota Conference archives in St. Peter.

[25] *Minn. Konf. Protokoll,* 1918, 34.

[26] Nelson, Helge, *The Swedes and the Swedish Settlements in North America* I, 202ff.

[27] Nelson, Helge, *op. cit.,* II, 40.

[28] *Aug.-Synod. Protokoll,* 1891, statistics.

[29] Nelson, Helge, *op. cit.,* II, 6; *Minn.-Konf. Referat,* 1901, statistics.

[30] Nelson, Helge, *op. cit.,* II, 6; *Minn.-Konf. Referat* 1911 ,statistics.

[31] Computed from the statistical reports in *Minn.-Konf. Referat* for the respective years.

[32] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll,* 1881, 12.

[33] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll,* 1883, 26.

[34] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll,* 1893, 42.

[35] P. O. Hanson to J. Fremling, Feb. 19, 1900, MS.

[36] Erik Rehner to P. Sjöblom, July 10, 1900, MS.

[37] Manuscript Minutes of Minnesota Conference, May 22-29, 1900, in Conference Archives. The report was referred to, but not printed in full, in the printed Minutes.

[38] L. G. Almen to P. Sjöblom, July 26, 1900, MS.

[39] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll* May 15-21, 1894, 118, 16.

[40] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och Dess Förs. Hist.,* II, 704, 966f.

[41] Computed from the reports in *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll,* May 22-29, 1900.

Chapter XV

From Swedish To English

On the day when Carl the cotter's son in stony Småland began to spin daydreams about America, and a farm of his own in the Red River Valley, the process of Americanization had already begun. When he said farewell to his Lisa and promised to send her a ticket to America soon, her life too was orientated to the new world.

In this country they soon learned such words as dollar, acre, deed, homestead, fence. Becoming part of American life and culture was an irresistible force, a force which they generally did not try to resist. Nor did they spend much time trying to understand it or analyze it. The Swedish immigrants found themselves in the melting pot along with pople from other countries, and in general the Swedes were as easily assimilated as any.

The more serious-minded among the Swedes, those who were concerned about religion and the church, had a strong resistance in the deeper recesses of the spirit. Perhaps with more of emotion and suspicion than of logic and reason they resisted the idea of becoming an Americanized church. This created a tension both in the individual and in the society of which he was a part. This tension is a very noticeable part of the story of the Lutheran Minnesota Conference from 1880 to 1920. In some respects the consequences are still present.

The great transition from Swedish to English was a slow process until after the turn of the century. In the early years of Swedish immigration, before the Civil War, the number of Swedes was so small comparatively that they had no expectation of maintaining the Swedish language very long in America. The first pioneer pastors quickly learned to use English. But with the increasing tide of immigration in the seventies a different attitude developed. Strong Swedish settlements in many parts of the Northwest, a growing church, an influential Swedish press, an awareness of political potentialities made the Swedes feel that their national origin was something of which they could be proud. Usually the children of the immigrants learned Swedish in the home, and probably never tried to speak English until the day they were enrolled in the first grade in public school. Even at school they played in Swedish at recess hours. Swedish orators extolled the virtues of the Swedes, and spoke of the Swedish as a language "that rings like metal on stone."

There were men, both pastors and laymen, who could see that assimilation into the American stream of life was inevitable. There were those who sought to guide the process of Americanization in such ways that the transition could be a help and not a hindrance to the religious life of the Swedish immigrants and their descendants. But the voice of wisdom and foresight was not always the one that prevailed in the voting at congregational meetings and church conventions.

A pastor in the Minnesota Conference reported in 1882 that he had baptized and confirmed an American girl. He had offered to instruct her in the English language, but she wanted to learn Swedish and was tutored by a woman in the congregation until she was able to take instruction with the Swedish pupils in the confirmation class. In reporting this unique case the pastor did not emphasize the thought that "Americans" might be won for the Lutheran church, but that children of Swedish parents could easily learn Swedish if they cared enough to try.[1]

As early as 1865 Pastor Eric Norelius of Red Wing wrote to W. A. Passavant: "It would be very desirable to have an English Lutheran congregation established here in Red Wing in time to gather in the large material which is already available. . . . I do hope that by the grace of God we may soon be able to establish an English congregation, since otherwise many of the young people will be lost to our Church."[2]

There were no immediate results. More than twenty years went by before an English Lutheran congregation was organized in Red Wing.

Norelius, during his first incumbency as president of the Augustana Synod (1874-81), called upon his fellow church members to begin reckoning with the fact that they were in the process of being Americanized. He said in his annual report in 1879: "It may also be well to remember that the pastor's way of mingling with and showing interest in the young people is of the greatest importance. The Americanization that is constantly going on especially in the cities, and the preference shown by the young people for the English language, also has a bearing on this question. I believe therefore that the Synod ought to take steps with respect to the language question so that the needs may be met in time. If we wait too long, we will suffer irreparable damage." [3]

A committee elected to study the transition from Swedish to English gave a report in 1880, suggesting that both languages be used as needed in worship services and in parish education, but advising against the formation of all-English congregations in Swedish communities. The committee cited the experience of German Lutherans who had found that there was strife between the German and English congregations, and that the English ones had drawn away so many members that the German congregations died out. The committee urged that the English language be introduced into the Swedish congregations and let them gradually become wholly English. This, said the committee, would obviate strife and difficulty in the transition. The Synod adopted the report.[4]

The Minnesota Conference faced the fact that some definite program was needed for the furtherance of English work, especially in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Red Wing. In 1881 the Conference adopted resolutions urging the congregations in those three places to call a man to begin English mission work. Financial aid was promised, and a petition was directed to the General Council asking aid for this mission.[5]

These resolutions brought about further discussion by those who saw the needs. First Lutheran Church, St. Paul, began to make plans, and the following year urged the Conference to consider the need of

English work in that city. The congregation had called Professor J. A. Bauman of Gustavus Adolphus College to spend the summer months in the eastern states soliciting money from the "American" Lutherans for the erection of a church in St. Paul to be used for English services. The Conference approved this action and gave its official recommendation to Prof. Bauman for his assignment.[6]

It soon became evident that it would be impractical if not impossible for the three congregations (Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Red Wing) to unite in calling a pastor for English mission work. In 1882 the Conference adopted a new resolution authorizing and directing the Executive Committee to call a man for this purpose.[7]

In the meantime there were others who took definite steps towards the beginning of English work in Minneapolis. Passavant, who was chairman of the General Council's newly established "English Home Mission Committee," was a personal friend of several of the Swedish Lutheran pastors. In the spring of 1881 he visited Minneapolis and preached on a Sunday evening at Augustana Church. The congregation was then worshipping in its old church which stood at 13th Avenue South and Washington. The pastor was Rev. John Ternstedt. Passavant learned that Augustana was about to build a new church, and that the old one was for sale. He began negotiations for purchasing the building, and the deal was closed in June. To secure a better location for his proposed English mission, Passavant later that year bought a lot at Eighth Avenue South and Fifth Street. The church was moved to that location in November, with the agreement that the Augustana congregation had the right to use it until its new church was ready. Passavant paid $1,000 for the church and $6,500 for the lot.[8]

The English Home Mission committee had no strong organization, and had no regular income with which to support its work. But Passavant had secured a promise from the St. John's Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, "the mother of English Lutheran congregations," of $500.00 per year to the support of a missionary in Minneapolis. This was to be supplemented by funds from other sources. In the spring of 1882 Rev. George H. Trabert, Lebanon, Pennsylvania, a member of the Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania, was called to go to Minneapolis, the call being issued by the English Home Mission Committee. Trabert was 38 years old, with twelve years of experience as a pastor.

On his first visit to Minneapolis he met Ternstedt, the pastor of Augustana, and from him he learned that he could get the co-operation of the Swedish Lutherans only on conditions laid down by the Augustana Synod: "That we approve of the mission of the General Council at Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Red Wing, provided that said mission will stand in ecclesiastical connection with and be regulated by our synod." The Home Mission Committee of the Augustana Synod had been authorized to enter into co-operation with the General Council's Committee in the establishment of the mission.[9]

Evidently there had been no co-operation, for Trabert says: "Upon telling him [Ternstedt] my mission he expressed surprise that the General Council's committee should send a man up there without them, who are a part of the General Council, being informed about it. . . . Rev. Ternstedt cordially welcomed me and at once consented that I should preach on Sunday evening but at the same time frankly stated that under no circumstances could they recede from their position, viz., that English congregations established by the General Council in places where the Augustana Synod is represented, and composed mostly of material from their body, must be founded under their auspices and be subject to the discipline of their body." [10]

Although Trabert was aware of the need of English work in Minneapolis he would not accept the call until the question of his relationship to the Augustana Synod was clarified. He reported to the General Council's Committee, and Passavant went to the Augustana Synod's convention in Altona, Illinois. There it was definitely stipulated that the new missions should be under the control of the Augustana Synod. At its meeting in October of the same year the General Council adopted certain regulations governing English home mission work, stating "that where a mission congregation is organized out of material from existing churches in connection with the General Council, said mission congregation, together with its pastor, shall belong to the Synod to which the mother church belongs." [11]

Trabert now accepted the call, which had also received the formal approval of the Minnesota Conference Executive Committee, and he arrived in Minneapolis in January, 1883. The Minnesota Conference mission treasury paid his house rent for seven months, at $35.00 per month.[12]

Pastor Trabert was received into the ministerium of the Augustana Synod in June, 1883. He had begun his work in Minneapolis in March and had organized St. John's Lutheran Church in May with seven communicant members, of whom only one was a Swede.[13]

Trabert's field was to include St. Paul. Here he obtained the help of a theological student, A. J. D. Haupt, whose father was general manager of the Northern Pacific Railroad. Young Haupt was a student at the seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and came to spend the summer in St. Paul. He had been there previously and had been in correspondence with Trabert regarding English mission work. Under his leadership a small congregation was organized in June, 1883, a lot was purchased in July, an old schoolhouse was bought and moved to the site, some remodeling was done, and the new church was ready for dedication in September, the first dedication of an English Lutheran church in the Northwest. The congregation had adopted the name "Memorial Lutheran Church" to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Luther's birth. The dedication was conducted by the vice president of the Minnesota Conference, Dr. P. J. Swärd.[14]

The two newly organized English congregations applied for membership in the Conference in the fall of 1883. Action on their petitions was postponed because they had adopted constitutions which in several details differed from the one recommended by the Augustana Synod. Almost an entire day was spent in discussion of these points, and the congregations were told exactly what amendments would be required. One pertained to secret orders, a second dealt with the matter of property rights in case of dissolution of the congregation, and the third had to do with the procedure to be followed in amending the constitution.[15]

At the February, 1884 meeting of the Conference these requirements had not been fulfilled, but the matter was reconsidered, and after further discussion the congregations were received, with an admonition to adopt the amendment regarding secret orders as soon as possible. A gesture was made towards giving financial aid to the English missions but there was no specific promise.[16]

Mr. Haupt was ordained by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania in June, 1884, and he was received into the Augustana Synod a few days later.[17]

Thus it seemed that the English Lutheran mission work in Minnesota had an auspicious start, with excellent leadership and with the official sanction of the Minnesota Conference. Both Trabert and Haupt were well received, and were active in the Conference, Trabert as a member of the Executive Committee, Haupt as a member of the hospital board, and in various other assignments. Trabert mastered the Swedish well enough not only to read the church papers and the convention reports, but he translated many of the old Swedish chorales into English.[18]

In Red Wing English services were conducted in the First Lutheran Church every other week in 1884 and 1885. A congregation was organized in 1886, and Trabert was the pastor until 1889, when Rev. C. B. Lindtved came to take charge. He was received into the Augustana Synod the same year.

Holy Trinity, Duluth, was organized in 1887, but soon disintegrated and was reorganized in 1888 under the name St. John's. Holy Trinity, St. Paul, was organized by Haupt in 1886. Work was also begun in Fargo, North Dakota, about the same time.

Of these English Lutheran congregations within Minnesota Conference territory during the '80's, the only ones received into the Conference were St. John's, Minneapolis; Memorial, St. Paul; St. Paul's, Red Wing; and Holy Trinity, Duluth. They received practically no financial aid from the Conference, either for pastors' salaries or for the erection of churches. They were entitled to send lay delegates to Conference conventions, but since the Swedish language was used almost exclusively at the conventions, delegates seldom came from the English congregations. It is not surprising that those congregations felt out of place in the Augustana Synod. At first there was some consideration given to the organizing of an English Conference. This was formally presented at a Conference convention in 1888. Though many favored this plan, there was strong opposition, and it was referred to a committee. When the committee reported at the next convention, action was again postponed.[19]

The English congregations, particularly those which had not joined the Minnesota Conference, were becoming insistent that something be done. Resolutions were adopted by the Conference in 1889, constructive and conciliatory in tone, but still not meeting the needs of the English congregations. The emphasis was on constitutional harmony, training pastors who could use both English and Swedish, adherence to the Augustana Synod. Congregations were urged to lift an annual offering for the English mission work.[20]

The following year the Conference president, Rev. P. Sjöblom, made a strong appeal for better support of the English mission work, and highly commended Trabert and Haupt, stating that they have shown "perseverance, faith, patience, and hope which can serve us Swedish pastors as examples." The convention adopted this resolution: "That the Conference consider the President's statement about the English missions worthy of consideration and acknowledge its significance for our Church, and in order that it may become more truly integrated with our Conference, the Conference desires that our English missionaries report to us at our annual meetings and that their congregations adopt the same discipline that is in effect in our Swedish congregations. If this is done it may help to get our congregations to give offerings." [21]

In response to a petition from the Minnesota Conference the Synod at its meeting in June 1890 resolved to seek a clarification of the issues involved. Furthermore, the Conferences were urged to establish English missions and call pastors for this purpose.[22]

In reply to the Synod's resolutions the General Council Home Mission Committee said:

1. The constitution adopted by the English Lutheran congregations is the one recommended by the General Council, and the English pastors feel that they have no liberty to recommend any other form.

2. As to regular connection with a Synod, they have conformed to the stipulation adopted in 1882, that where an English congregation is organized out of materials from existing churches in connection with the General Council, said mission congregation, together with its pastor, shall belong to the synod to which the mother church belongs." But some congregations are composed of elements of various

nationalities and it would be unwise to force them into a synod of one particular nationality.

3. If Conferences of the Augustana Synod establish English missions of their own, it will be considered a worthy and commendable move.[23]

At the 1890 convention of the Minnesota Conference Rev. Haupt had been asked to speak on home missions. At Trabert's suggestion he used the occasion to propose publicly the idea of an English Lutheran synod. It caused a considerable stir. That spring the Memorial congregation in St. Paul gave notice of its desire to withdraw from the Augustana Synod. Passavant visited the Twin Cities in the fall of 1890 and discussed matters with the English-speaking pastors, but the question of a new Synod was talked about only in an informal manner. Trabert was in no haste to withdraw from Augustana, and he counselled the others to make haste slowly, to avoid misunderstandings. The question came up at the Augustana Synod convention in Chisago Lake Church, Center City, in June, 1891. Trabert introduced a resolution "that the Augustana Synod permit such English congregations in its connection, that desire to do so, to withdraw, and to give them an honorable dismissal so as to enable them to unite with other English congregations on this territory in the organization of a distinctively English Synod." Trabert reports that several leading men of the Synod, including Dr. O. Olson, president of Augustana College and Theological Seminary, spoke in favor of the resolution. But after several hours of debate on Friday afternoon a vote on the resolution was postponed until Saturday. In order to make train connections in St. Paul Friday night a large number of delegates left, including some of the strongest advocates of the resolution. On Saturday the remaining ones, not sure of being a quorum, hesitated to take a decisive vote on this important matter, but referred it to a committee for study and report the next year. Almost immediately the English congregations prepared for a meeting in Memorial Church, St. Paul, and the Synod of the Northwest was organized in September, 1891.[24]

Thus the English mission work, energetically begun by Trabert—under Passavant's aid and encouragement—continued for eight years with marked success, went out of the hands of the Augustana Synod. It is useless to speculate on what might have been, and it is difficult to apportion the "blame" in fair shares. Many in the Minnesota Conference, perhaps the majority, were fearful and suspicious of English missions, partly for nationalistic and linguistic reasons, partly because of the charge that the English pastors were proselyting among the members of Swedish congregations. Concerning these things Trabert wrote to Sjöblom:

"There is, in my humble opinion, one thing which may eventually do great harm in the Augustana Synod, and that is a sort of selfish Swedish pride on the part of some of the younger ministers. . . . It is the old song over again which used to, and does yet, show itself among the ultra-Germans, Deutsch! Deutsch!! Deutsch!! so here it is Svensk! Svensk!! Svensk!! I can easily excuse it in those who have been educated in Sweden and have not been able to live themselves into American relations, but for those raised and educated here to be so narrow is inexcusable." [25]

Trabert harbored no resentment against the Swedes. In 1895 he expressed a longing to get back into the Augustana Synod: "My heart is in the Swedish part of our church. . . . I have no rest in my spirit until I get back among the Swedish brethren. . . . Now when I see the need of English work in the Augustana Synod I would like to help the cause and my hope and prayer is that a field may be opened. . . . Now you know my inmost soul." [26]

In another letter to Sjöblom, Trabert was grieved over criticism that had been bestowed on him because he had criticized a hymn translation from the Swedish, saying it was "neither English nor poetry," and he "had reason to believe that those caricatures of the beautiful Swedish hymns would be published in a book, by which the English public would only laugh at the Swedish literature, and it was my object to prevent such a calamity. . . . However much some of the Swedish brethren hate me I still love them, and I know I have three warm friends in the Augustana Synod, viz., Pastor Sjöblom, Rev. Telleen, and Dr. Swenson, and all feel as I do with regard to the English work in the Synod." [27]

The question of the constitution adopted by English congregations was discussed by the Conference several times, and no satisfactory solution was reached. This may have been the crux of the problem in the minds of many, though it is possible that this was magnified beyond its actual reality.

After the English congregations had withdrawn, the Minnesota Conference resolved to establish its own English mission work, but ten years went by without tangible results. An English congregation in St. Peter (now the Trinity Lutheran) was organized in 1892. This congregation did not come into being as a result of Conference initiative or aid, but mainly through the labors and leadership of English-speaking professors at Gustavus Adolphus College. The congregation was organized in 1892, and was received into the Conference in 1896.

For several years prior to that time occasional services had been conducted by the English professors, Koiner (who came to St. Peter in 1880), Bauman (1881), Uhler (1882), Frick (1883), Sander (1885). At first they used the Swedish Lutheran Church, at the invitation of the pastor, J. G. Lagerstrom. Sunday school was held at nine in the morning, and worship services every other Sunday evening. Strong opposition developed, and the congregation was stirred up to such an extent that contributions fell to a low figure. The English services were then held in the homes of the professors until the Church Council again permitted the use of the Swedish Church.[28]

The Conference in 1889 gave recognition to the need of English work in St. Peter, and the English professors were encouraged to try to find a suitable place for the work, but "not with the purpose of organizing a congregation at this time."[29]

No permanent arrangements for the English work could be made for several years. The English professors were members of the Swedish congregation, but held their own services more or less regularly. Some of them attended services in the German Lutheran church occasionally. There was also a Norwegian Lutheran church, with one Sunday afternoon service each month, in the Norwegian language. A member of this group urged Professor John Sander to begin English services in that church, and permission was secured for use of the building. The first service was held there on October 11, 1891 with 25 persons in attendance. Sunday school was begun in January, 1892, and a catechetical class was enrolled. Professors Uhler and Shanor assisted

Sander in the work. Interest increased, and on April 24 the First English Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized.[30]

The congregation did not take immediate steps to join a synod. There was considerable doubt as to its being welcomed into the Augustana Synod. The constitution merely said that the congregation should join a synod belonging to the General Council. The Synod of the Northwest had not yet been admitted to the General Council.

Sander was summoned before the church council of the Swedish Lutheran Church to give an account of his activities in starting "an opposition church." The College Board also questioned him. He was not forbidden to continue the work, but after he had severed his connection with the Swedish Church he was faced with the question of his synodical affiliation. His future as a member of the College faculty depended on the outcome of this issue. The president of the College, Dr. M. Wahlstrom, favored the English work, since many students understood little or no Swedish. Chapel services were conducted in English. Wahlstrom urged Sander to bring his congregation into the Minnesota Conference, to avoid further difficulty. The congregation was in no haste to act on this question, but when it was evident that Sander would be forced to resign either from the congregation or from the faculty, the congregation voted in November, 1895 to seek admittance to the Conference.

At the next Conference convention, in February, 1896, the application was considered. The question was raised as to the constitution adopted by the congregation. It was not the Augustana constitution, and the main point at issue was whether members of secret orders were received as members of the congregation. After several hours of discussion Sander was able to convince the delegates that his congregation was not violating the principles of the Augustana Synod, though he knew that four of the members belonged to some secret order. The congregation was admitted to the Minnesota Conference without a dissenting vote.[31]

In spite of this favorable action by the Conference there was no sudden change in the attitude towards English missions. At one Conference meeting a Swedish pastor made the remark, "It is all right to have an English Lutheran Church at St. Peter, but the English work of the Conference ought to be confined to St. Peter." [32]

In May, 1899 the Conference convention was held in the Swedish Lutheran Church, St. Peter. Sander arranged to have several Swedish pastors speak in his church, including E. O. Stone, E. J. Peterson, Alfred Bergin, L. A. Johnston, and F. M. Eckman. A large number of the Swedish pastors attended these English services and began to think better of the work.[33]

The pastor of the Swedish Church in St. Peter at this time was Michael Sandell. He had served as pastor in St. Peter 1871-1874, then moved back to Sweden. He returned to America and again was called to St. Peter in 1892. He was a conscientious and able pastor, but deeply imbued with a devotion for the Swedish and greatly agitated by the existence of an English Lutheran Church in St. Peter. In 1899 he sought to put the English Church and its pastor within strict limits. At a joint meeting of the church councils of the two congregations Sandell submitted the following rules for Sander's guidance: 1. That the English Lutheran pastor must not receive any person into his catechumen class who had been baptized by a Swedish pastor, without the Swedish pastor's consent. 2. That the English pastor must not receive any children of Swedish parents into the English Sunday school. 3. That the English pastor should abstain from making an address where Swedish church people were concerned. 4. That should any Swedish church people come to the English Lutheran Sunday school, they should immediately be sent back to the Swedish church. In reply, Sander merely said that when people came to his church he would not send them away. In 1902 Sandell again went back to Sweden. Sander resigned from his congregation and from the College the same year.[34]

At the dawn of the twentieth century the English language was beginning to be accepted in the regular program of some of the Swedish congregations. The pastor of the Cambridge congregation reported that in 1900 they had English services every other Sunday evening, and some children in Sunday school and in catechetical class were being instructed in English. Indeed the report contains this interesting item: "There is a little German settlement near here, and it has happened that on the same day I have preached in Swedish, English, and German." [35]

The pastor at Cannon Falls reported that "English services are held the first Sunday evening each month and there seems to be great interest, especially among the young. We have an English Bible class in Sunday school, and will start classes for children in English. At first it was difficult for me to preach in English, but it is going better."[36]

These two congregations were not typical. Rural parishes in general had not yet begun to use English, except perhaps an occasional baptismal or marriage ceremony. But even in the rural congregations a demand for English was being expressed. In the city congregations the urgent need of more English had been a problem for a decade, and the Conference had done nothing to aid in the solution of it since the Synod of the Northwest was organized. Relations between the Minnesota Conference and the Synod of the Northwest had not improved with the years, and in 1900 the Conference expressed its disapproval of the Synod of the Northwest because it had organized a congregation in Cannon Falls without any consultation with the Augustana pastor. The Conference voted to ask the General Council not to let such things happen again, and if this demand would not be met the Conference would petition the Augustana Synod to leave the General Council.[37]

The following year it was reported that the General Council's Home Mission Committee had called a man to organize English Sunday schools within Minnesota Conference territory and had asked the Executive Committee of the Conference for approval and co-operation. At the Conference convention a special committee formulated resolutions, suggesting to the General Council that the Sunday School organizer be called in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Conference; that he should not organize English Sunday schools near Swedish Lutheran churches without their consent; that, if possible, an Augustana pastor be chosen (John Telleen was suggested); that the Synod of the Northwest be urged to adopt the Augustana constitution for congregations and become the English conference of the Augustana Synod. These resolutions (except the suggestion that Telleen be called) were adopted by the Conference.[38]

At the fall meeting the same year it was reported that the General Council had rejected the proposal from the Minnesota Conference, because "it appears to us to be based on the supposition that the majority of our members are of Swedish origin, which is incorrect even as to that portion of our synodical territory covered by the Minnesota Conference. . . ." Thereupon the Executive Committee of the Conference had called Telleen to be English missionary. His activities were to be governed by these rules: No English mission is to be started where there is a Swedish Lutheran Church except by mutual agreement; the English missionary is not to investigate whether a need for English mission work exists but only on instruction from the Conference or its Executive Committee. Pastors and congregations were urged to give instruction in English in Sunday school, and where pupils are confirmed in English there should be English services. The Conference stated further that English missions may receive financial aid on the same basis as Swedish missions; and "while Conference desires with all its ability to carry on English work this is not to be done at the cost of or to the detriment of our Swedish congregations, but hereafter as heretofore the greatest emphasis shall be placed on keeping the Swedish language and giving Christian instruction in Swedish." It was also decided that at Conference conventions both languages be used and that "as soon as it is needed" the minutes be published also in English.[39]

The first congregation organized by John Telleen as the English home missionary was the English Ev. Lutheran Ebenezer Church of Beresford, South Dakota, received into the Conference in May, 1903. (No report as to membership or other statistics of the congregation appear in the Conference Minutes, and it soon vanished from the reports altogether.) The Conference President, Dr. J. Fremling, said to the convention delegation: "Our English mission work has not had the progress nor the encouragement that one would desire, though we have a missionary who has good insight and is zealous in his work. But we must not let this work cease, for the Synod of the Northwest will come into our congregations and draw especially our young people to them." The Executive Committee expressed its disappointment particularly because the strong support of English mission work in St. Paul and Minneapolis had not materialized as expected. But "under no circumstances should we hasten the transition from Swedish to English." [40]

The following year the Executive Committee said: "The experience in English missions in two years shows that many are hesitant, not to say indifferent, and some are definitely opposed to it." Two more English congregations had been organized in South Dakota, one at Pierre, one at Huron; one at Barrett, Minnesota, and Grace Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. The three first mentioned soon disappeared from the records. Grace, Minneapolis (originally at Seven Corners, now at Harvard and Delaware Southeast), is the oldest congregation officially established as an English mission under the auspices of the Conference. The Executive Committee said that English missions had cost about $3,000, and "this work must continue." The Committee urged the Conference to consider that "to confirm classes in English and then to let the Swedish be dominant in the church is unsatisfactory. It is not enough to have one or two English services each month." [41]

Telleen resigned in 1905. The interest in English mission work was discouraging, as stated in the 1906 report of the Conference president, J. A. Krantz. Dr. Krantz said that this was the time to begin with the method that should have been introduced 25 years ago, "to urge our older mother churches in the cities and in the country, to establish English mission work that will be under the supervision and care of the congregation, with necessary aid from the Conference, until the new congregation can carry its own burden. No one knows the field and the needs better than the mother church and no one can better care for the young and tender plant. And the new organization will not be looked upon as an intruder, but as a child." [42]

The establishment of all-English congregations proceeded slowly. Gloria Dei, St. Paul, organized 1908, developed out of the "St. Anthony Hill Mission," originally a branch Sunday school of the First Lutheran Church. Messiah, Minneapolis, also organized 1908, was a direct result of action taken by the First Augustana congregation, where English had been used in the Sunday school and the catechetical class since 1892. Similarly Arlington Hills, St. Paul, organized 1909, had its beginning as an "English mission society" of the Gustavus Adolphus congregation. The oldest English congregation in Duluth is Holy Trinity, organized by the English speaking group of the Bethany congregation in 1912.

Except for one small congregation in Wisconsin (Bethany, Dresser, 1914) and two in North Dakota (Tolley, 1911, and Greene, 1913) the above mentioned were the only all-English churches in the Minnesota Conference prior to World War I. In 1913 P. A. Mattson, in his first annual report as Conference president, optimistically said that the English work had made good progress "and the Conference has good reason to be glad and thankful for what has been done the past year. . . . Messiah, Minneapolis, stands firmly on its own feet and this year will pay its debt in full. . . . Grace at Seven Corners also is making progress. In St. Paul Gloria Dei has completed its auditorium and has had its beautiful and attractive temple dedicated as a God's house. . . . The membership has already gone over the 100-mark. . . . On the Arlington Hill field a pastor has been stationed, and the congregation intends to build a church this summer. . . . In Duluth a congregation has been organized under very encouraging conditions. . . . and already has 65 devoted, influential, and experienced members and 150 in the Sunday school. Next summer it will build a suitable church."[43]

The upsurge of nationalism in 1917 and 1918, the slogans of "100 per cent Americanism" and "no hyphenated Americans" gave a sudden boost to the English language in churches, homes, and communities, with a corresponding decline of the Swedish. Even in the "solidly Swedish" rural churches the English soon became the dominant language. In most congregations the transition was accomplished peacefully and with Christian tact and patience. But this cannot be said of all. There were congregations dominated by ultra-conservative older members who insisted on Swedish, and where many young people were discouraged and quit the church. There were places where young people made fun of pastors who mispronounced English words. There were members who showed rude disrespect to faithful shepherds who had served them well in Swedish and found it difficult to change language in their old age. Swedish was the language of the heart to the older generation, but sometimes it was a serious barrier between them and the Americanized newer generations. The transition period was often a time of heartache.

Beginning in 1910 an English summary of the Conference reports and resolutions was printed together with the complete Swedish Minutes. From 1919 to 1928 the Minutes were published in full in both languages, the Swedish edition being the larger one until 1923, when 4,000 copies of each edition were printed. In 1926 the Swedish edition was reduced to 2,000, and the English increased to 6,000. In 1929 the Minutes were in English only.

In 1929, for the first time, an English translation of the Conference constitution was presented for consideration. It was adopted in 1931.

Swedish services were conducted more or less regularly in a number of congregations until the time of World War II, and at least in one instance, until the second half of the 20th century. First Augustana in Minneapolis had Swedish services, with Dr. J. E. Rydbäck in charge, until 1954.

Swedish radio services on Station WCAL were inaugurated in 1938, at the invitation of Dr. J. A. Aasgaard, president of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America. The Executive Committee elected Otto Leonardson and Rev. C. G. Anderson to procure speakers and music for the services. Response from listeners encouraged the Conference to continue these arrangements year after year. Otto Leonardson still serves as director of Swedish radio services. The Conference has given a subsidy to support these services since 1950. Prior to that time gifts sent by listeners constituted the only source of financial support.

Thus the mother tongue of the pioneers of the Minnesota Conference had all but disappeared at the end of the first century. No statistics are available to show what percentage of the members now are of Swedish birth or descent. Though every congregation in the Conference has members of many nationalities, it is quite safe to estimate that at least two-thirds of all the members are wholly or partly of Swedish origin. Of the 279 pastors in the Conference in 1956 almost 95 per cent were wholly or partly of Swedish background. But of the pastors serving parishes in 1956 fewer than five per cent have ever delivered a sermon in Swedish, and fewer than twenty per cent have rendered any pastoral service in Swedish.

The sources of the history of the Conference prior to 1920, with all the many stories of pioneer beginnings, and the many angles of religious, cultural, institutional, and personal interest, are almost entirely in the Swedish language. This rich vein of valuable historical materials seems doomed to a most unfortunate obscurity, unless there is a resurgence of interest in the Swedish language.

NOTES

[1] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, Feb. 14-20, 1882.
[2] Gerberding, G. H., *Life of Passavant*, 370.
[3] *Aug. Synod Protokoll*, June 19-27, 1879.
[4] *Aug. Synod Protokoll*, June 17-25, 1880, 72ff.
[5] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, June 7-14, 1881.
[6] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, Feb. 14-20, 1882.
[7] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, May 30-June 1, 1882.
[8] Trabert, G. H., *English Lutheranism in the Northwest*, 24ff.
[9] Trabert, *op. cit.*, 31ff.; *Aug.-Synod Protokoll*, June 15-22, 1882.
[10] Trabert, *op. cit.*, 33.
[11] Trabert, *op. cit.*, 41.
[12] Trabert, *op. cit.*, 43.
[13] Trabert, *op. cit.*, 48; *Aug.-Synod Protokoll*, June 14-22, 1883, 73.
[14] Trabert, *op. cit.*, 42, 50, 51; *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, 1884; Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och dess Förs. Historia*, I, 199.
[15] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, Nov. 11-19, 1883.
[16] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, Feb. 12-18, 1884.
[17] *Aug. Synod Protokoll*, June 19-26, 1884, 67.
[18] G. H. Trabert to P. Sjöblom (MS) June 7, 1895. "I have translated over 40 of the psalms in the psalmbook into English." In *The Hymnal* published by Augustana Book Concern in 1925, Hymns No. 125, 237, and 602 are translations by Trabert.
[19] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, Feb. 7-13, 1888; Oct. 24-29, 1888; Trabert, *op. cit.*, 120.
[20] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, May 22-25, 1889.
[21] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, Feb. 11-17, 1890.
[22] *Aug. Synod. Protokoll*, June 16-24, 1890, 74f.
[23] *Aug. Synod. Protokoll*, June 16-23, 1891, 23ff.
[24] Trabert, *op. cit.*, 123ff.
[25] G. H. Trabert to P. Sjöblom (MS), Nov. 5, 1894.
[26] G. H. Trabert to P. Sjöblom (MS), June 7, 1895.
[27] G. H. Trabert to P. Sjöblom (MS), Sept. 9, 1895.
[28] Sander, John, *First Ten Years of First Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Saint Peter*, 5ff.
[29] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, May 22-25, 1889, 5.
[30] Sander, John, *op. cit.*, 17f.
[31] Sander, John, *op. cit.*, 29ff.
[32] Sander, John, *op. cit.*, 47.
[33] Sander, John, *op. cit.*, 53.
[34] Sander, John, *op. cit.*, 56, 65f; Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf och dess Förs. Hist.* II, 662.
[35] Bergin, Alfred, Pastoral report to Conf. Pres., (MS) Jan. 2, 1901.
[36] Johnson, Swan, Pastoral report to Conf. Pres., (MS) Jan. 17, 1901.
[37] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, May 22-29, 1900.
[38] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, Feb. 18-25, 1902.
[39] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, Oct. 21-25, 1902.
[40] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, May 12-19, 1903.
[41] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, May 17-23, 1904.
[42] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, Feb. 13-20, 1906, 36f.
[43] *Minn.-Konf. Protokoll*, Feb. 25-Mar. 3, 1913, 28.

Chapter XVI

The Story of Social Missions

A plea and a prayer, a dream and a hope in the heart of a zealous young pastor may be said to have been the beginning of Bethesda Lutheran Hospital in St. Paul. Rev. Jonas Auslund, a native of Sweden, had come to America in 1867 at the age of 24. Three years later he was ordained to the ministry in the Augustana Synod. After serving one year in Cambridge and Fish Lake he accepted a call in 1871 to the First Lutheran Church of St. Paul. This congregation was already seventeen years old and had had a resident pastor only one year, when Eric Norelius was there in 1860-1861.

In the rapidly growing city of St. Paul, largely neglected by the Minnesota Conference up to that time, Auslund found a need not only for the preaching and teaching ministry of the Lutheran Church, but also for social mission work. Soon after he had come to St. Paul he wrote to Norelius, then serving as president of the Conference:

"The need of a hospital here in St. Paul is being felt more and more, and it hurts me especially to see Christian young women who are ill lying at the boarding houses and saloons, where dancing, drinking, swearing, etc. are going on, and no Christian care can be given to the sick. Think about this and let it be our mutual prayer topic in the presence of the Lord, that He may open the way for such a hospital, if it is in accordance with His will. I want to hear the opinion of the brethren about this at the next Conference meeting." [1]

When the Conference met, a few weeks later, in the Scandian Grove Church, St. Peter, Auslund brought the matter to the attention of the delegates. They adopted a resolution to this effect: That we encourage our friends in St. Paul to seek to establish a hospital, and that we support the project with our prayers and gifts.[2]

There were no direct and visible results from this promise of moral and financial support. The Conference was still small, and the home mission problem loomed large. The moving of the Conference school to St. Peter took money and effort. The congregation in St. Paul was just beginning to grow. Auslund worked hard, but time and energy did not suffice for all that needed to be done. In 1877 he resigned and became pastor of the Augustana congregation in Minneapolis, but became ill and died in 1878.

It fell to the lot of his successor in St. Paul, A. P. Monten, to take hold of the hospital project, but several years went by before a start was made. At a Conference convention in the fall of 1879 a committee was elected—A. P. Monten, Norelius, Sjöblom, and one layman, N. O. Werner of Red Wing—to prepare a constitution for a "Church Extension Society." The committee reported in February, 1880 that nothing had been done. Norelius resigned from the committee because of other duties. In October of the same year the committee submitted a proposed plan for an organization to be called "The Tabitha Society of the State of Minnesota." The Conference approved the incorporation of the Society and elected a board of trustees consisting of Pastors Norelius, Monten, Sjöblom, Ternstedt, and Tornell, and four laymen, Herman Stockenstrom, John Bodin, N. Borgstrom, and J. W. Anderson. The Tabitha Society, as incorporated, was co-extensive with the Conference. Monten read a communication from his congregation, urging the establishment of a hospital in St. Paul, and the Conference voted to direct the congregation's attention to the new Society. Monten set to work to raise money in St. Paul, and was able to report $600 on hand in June, 1881. He was encouraged to continue, and in February, 1882 he reported that the hospital was to be opened as soon as a superintendent could be secured. O. Olson had been out with Monten to solicit money for the hospital, and A. P. Cronquist had been chosen as treasurer. He had $1,910.20 in the treasury for purchase of a site, and $1,391.57 had been secured for equipment.

Monten himself had bought a house and eight acres of land near Lake Como, an area which then was sparsely settled. The house was being prepared for use as a hospital. A new cellar had been dug. Kitchen and dining room facilities were in the basement. There was a bathroom on first floor. Hot and cold water was piped to the kitchen and the bathroom. New sewer pipes had been laid. Two cows had been donated to the institution, one coming from East Union in Carver County, and one from Beckville in Meeker County.

Mr. and Mrs. Mellgren were secured to take charge, and Bethesda Hospital received its first patient on April 4, 1882. He was Gustaf Swärd, who had been found living alone, without care, in a little shanty eight feet square. He was lying on a bed which was also his food storage box. He was married, but his wife and children were still in Sweden.

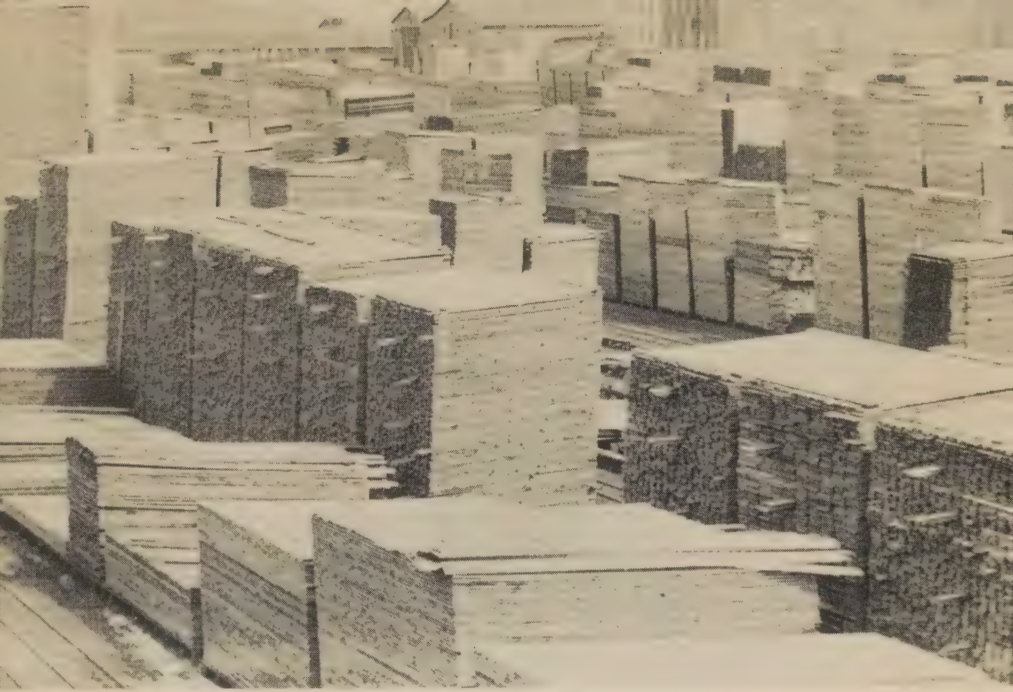
During the next 11 months 158 patients came to the hospital. At regular rates the income would have been $2,146.92, but the Hospital had received only $836.25. Poor people had been welcomed in preference to those who could pay. Patients had come from various parts of Minnesota and some from Wisconsin. Inquiries had come from prospective patients in Pennsylvania and Utah.

Monten reported that the Hospital had an excellent location, and that fever was cured one or two weeks faster there than in the hospitals down town. Dr. Lundgren was chief doctor, and Dr. Ohage was the surgeon. Dr. Didolph cared for skin diseases, and Dr. Schulin was ear and eye specialist. The druggist, John Bodin, had sold drugs at low prices. One very difficult operation had been performed, according to Monten. A Mr. Smith from Stearns County had part of a rib removed and fluid around the heart tapped. One patient had had his stomach pumped several times.[3]

The Conference was greatly impressed by the report, voted to buy the property from Monten, and to make further improvements.

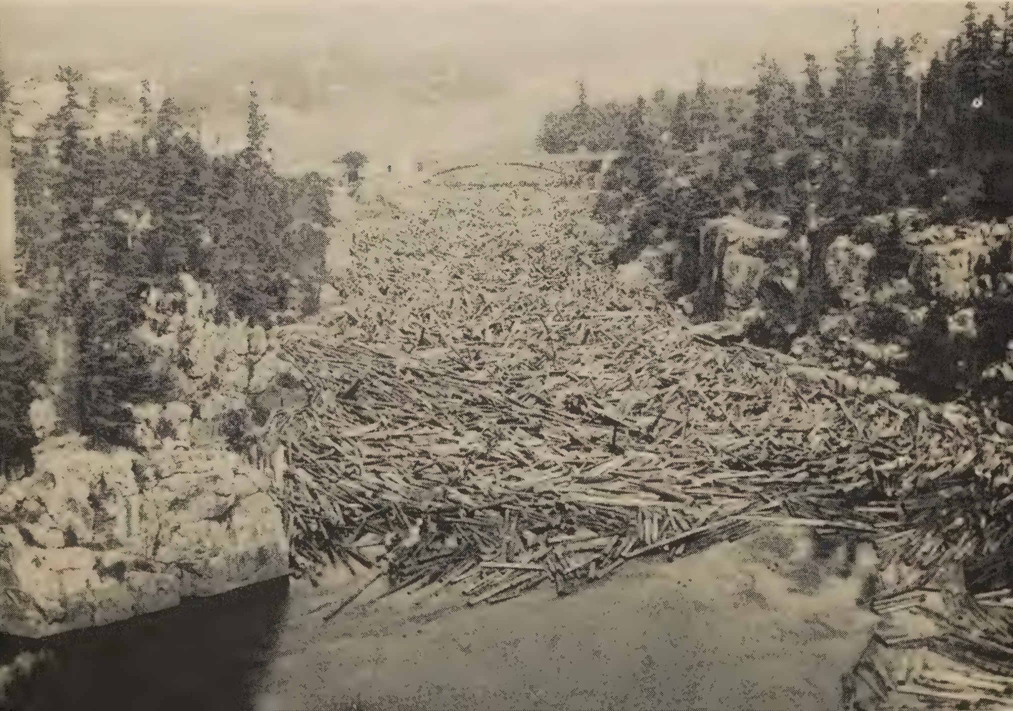
But the Mellgrens resigned and left in August. N. A. Klasell became superintendent. From March 1, 1883 to February 1, 1884 the Hospital cared for 71 patients, of whom only 15 had paid full rates; 35 had paid part of their bill, and 21 had received free care. If all had paid in full the total would have been $1,985.00. The Hospital debt at the time was almost $4,000.00. Dr. K. H. E. Cassel was chief of staff.

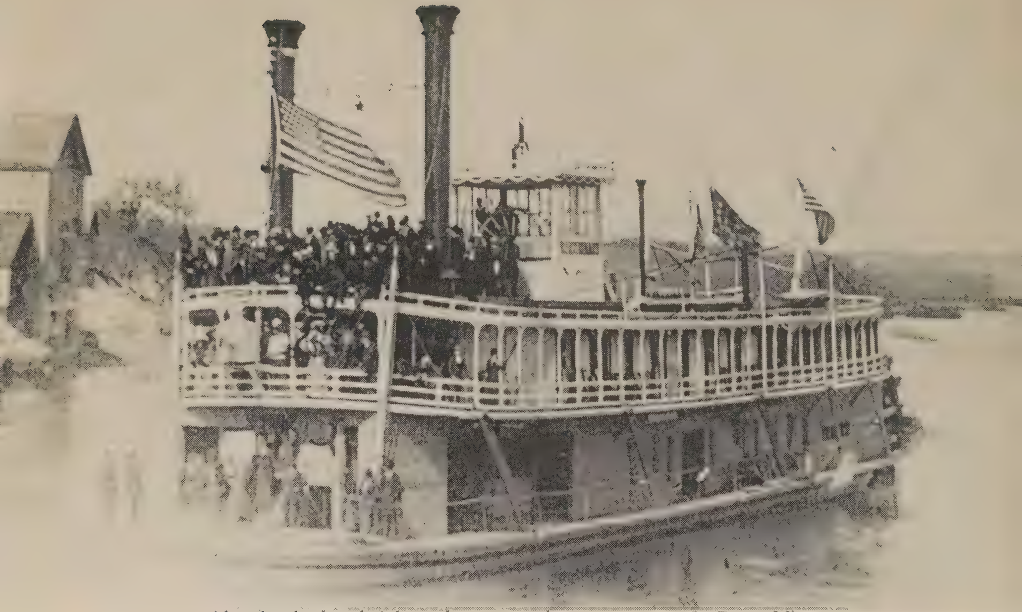
The Conference voted to receive only paying patients until the



C. A. Smith Lumber Yard, Minneapolis, Minnesota. (received by Museum November 6, 1922)

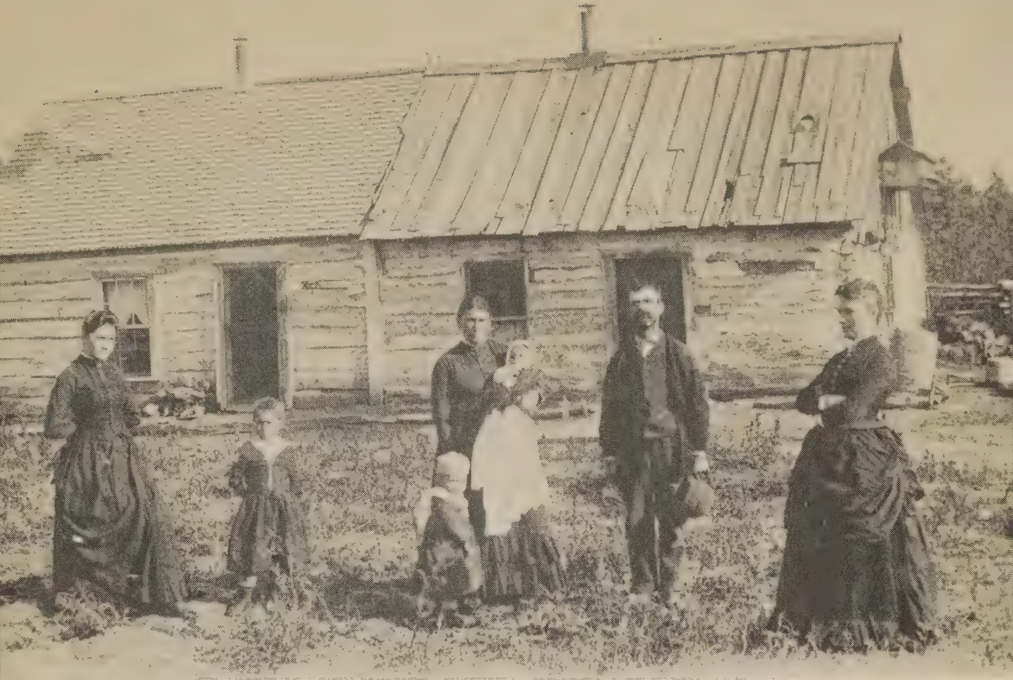
Immense log jam in St. Croix River, Taylors Falls, Minnesota, 1892





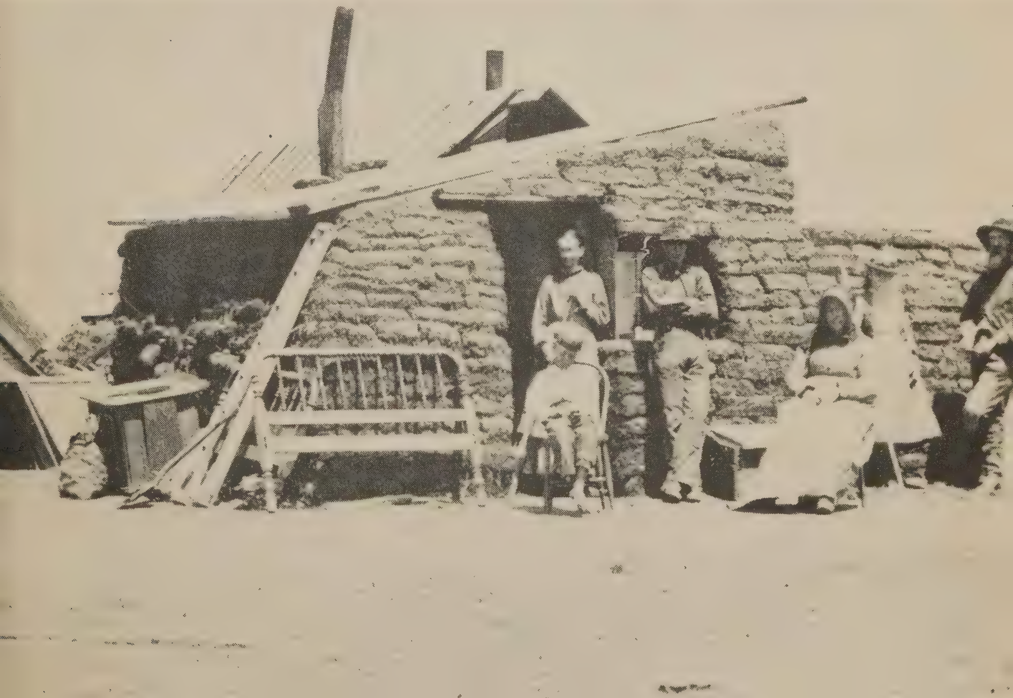
Said to be the last freight and passenger boat to come to St. Peter, Minnesota on the Minnesota River, 1885

Photograph taken on Hay Creek in Kanabec County, Minnesota, on March 1, 1891 at the Camp of Mulvey and Carmichael. Left to right: (1) William Hutchinson, Foreman; (2) David Carmichael, of the Firm; (3) Charles Plecher; (4) Charles Peterson.



A Frontier House in Minnesota (received by Museum June 19, 1936)

Sod House. Home Sweet Home a la Dakota (reproduced from Collections of the Library of Congress)



Threshing 1855 - 1890

Typical Northern Alberta Wheat Field

debt was liquidated. As a result only 37 patients were cared for during the first ten months of 1884. On November 1, 1884 the debts totalled $4,570.00, and the Conference voted to close the institution. Early in 1885 Rev. C. M. Ryden was called as superintendent, but the Hospital was not to be opened until he had secured money to pay the debts. He did not accept the call, but tried for three months to solicit money in the Conference. Very little was secured, but in 1887 he accepted the position of superintendent. The Hospital opened again on May 1, 1887, and soon there were 13 patients in the Hospital. Then he was forced to go out again to get more money, and no more patients were received. The Hospital was soon closed again, and Ryden resigned.[4]

An offer had been presented to the Conference by Mrs. Andrew Jackson, who owned a spring near Cannon Falls, supposed to have medicinal value. The Conference asked the Board of the Tabitha Society to investigate whether a health resort should be built there. Nothing came of this suggestion.

The Conference decided to turn over the Como property to a new group organized under the name, "Board of Education and Charities of Minneapolis and St. Paul," on condition that the new organization pay the debts and operate the hospital as originally intended.[5]

These conditions were not met, and the property remained in the hands of the Conference. By 1891 the debts had increased to $8,000, bearing interest at seven or eight per cent. The Tabitha Board was authorized to open the hospital when it deemed it possible to do so. Monten, Swärd, Boman, Petri, Bodin, and C. A. Smith were to call on people in the cities in an effort to secure co-operation.

Rev. C. A. Hultkrans of Geneseo, Illinois, accepted a call to be superintendent and under his leadership a new start was made at a new location. Hultkrans, 32 years of age, with no experience in hospital administration, but with laudable zeal and enthusiasm, set to work on the project. A building, which had been valued at $16,000, was bought for $13,000 in downtown St. Paul, at Ninth and Wacouta. With some minor repairs and alterations, it could house 30 patients. The new Bethesda Hospital opened its doors on March 8, 1892. There were two patients the first day, 15 by the end of March. Only paying patients were to be received except when funds were available for free care.[6]

During the first eight months of operation, 180 patients were cared for. Of these 110 were Swedes, 42 Norwegians, 25 Americans, two Germans, one Dane, and one Irishman. Forty-seven were residents of St. Paul. Of the total, 140 were Lutherans, 72 of them members of Minnesota Conference parishes. Some of the "Americans" were reported as being rich, paying $15 to $20 per week for private rooms. Eight patients had received free care.[7]

Monten had left St. Paul in 1888, and P. J. Swärd had become his successor at First Lutheran Church. He was chairman of the Tabitha Board in 1892 when the new hospital project got under way. Hultkrans served not only as superintendent but also as chaplain. In 1893, after a year of operation, he reported that at least 200 patients had been turned away for lack of room. The Conference then authorized the board to build an addition when the Como property was sold, but debts should not exceed $10,000.00. The following year, however, reports showed that the hospital had debts totalling $14,750. The Como property was then valued at $16,000, the new hospital also $16,000, with equipment valued at $2,800. The hospital continued to operate at full capacity. From May 1, 1894 to February 5, 1895, 225 patients were cared for. Of these, 122 were Swedes, 81 were Norwegians, 11 Americans, three Germans, two Irishmen, one English, one Scotch, one Jew, one African, one Swedish-Norwegian, one Finn.[8]

Hultkrans was authorized to solicit money for a new hospital, and in 1897 it was reported that an addition had been built for $17,000. Total assets were then $60,000, debts totalled $28,000.

The beginning of a new century was to be a time for payment of all Conference debts, and through this appeal in 1900 Bethesda received $17,000. A few years later a new addition was built, and in 1909 a completely new 125-bed hospital was built at a cost of $75,000. James J. Hill contributed $5,000 to the building fund.

Hultkrans continued as superintendent of Bethesda until his death in 1915. The Conference elected J. A. Krantz as his successor. Krantz had served as pastor and home missionary in Duluth, Minneapolis, and other places, and as Conference president from 1904 to 1913.

The Como property was sold in 1915 for $5,000.[9]

Krantz began to plan for a new hospital at a new location. The site at Ninth and Wacouta did not allow room for any further expansion, and it was becoming an industrial area, unsuitable for hospital purposes. With the authority of the Conference, the Tabitha Board in 1918 bought an entire block on Capitol Boulevard, a short distance north of the state capitol, at $71,000. The property included three houses. In 1922 the Conference voted to build a new hospital, but this did not materialize until in 1931.[10]

From the beginning, the care of patients at the hospital was in charge of deaconesses from the Synod's Institute in Omaha. Sister Bothilda Swenson gave years of outstanding service. The supply of deaconesses was never sufficient to meet the needs, and a nurses' training school was begun at Bethesda. After a few years it was discontinued, and in 1903 the Conference established Bethesda Deaconess Home. Hultkrans became director of the Home, while serving also as superintendent of the Hospital. Rev. A. F. Almer of Forest Lake became assistant director and part time teacher at the Deaconess Home, and chaplain at the Hospital.

The number of deaconesses was never more than 25, and they were not all stationed at the Hospital. The nurses' training school, which had been begun in the nineties but discontinued when the deaconess institute was begun, was again established in 1909.

The first deaconess in the Augustana Synod was Sister Bothilda Swenson. After receiving her training at the Mary Drexel Deaconess Home, Philadelphia, and at a Deaconess Home in Stockholm, Sweden, she became superintendent in charge of nursing at Bethesda for nine years. One of the young women who came for training at Bethesda was Eleonora Slattengren of Center City. After receiving further training at Philadelphia, she was elected Mother Superior of the Bethesda Deaconess Home and Directing Sister of Bethesda Hospital. For fifteen years, 1909-1924, she filled this dual office. Another deaconess from Center City, Sister Esther Porter, served as superintendent of the nurses' training school from 1911 until her death in 1926.[11]

Dr. E. M. Lundholm had received his medical training in Sweden, and in 1891 began to practice his profession in St. Paul. He became associated with Bethesda Hospital from the time of its opening in 1892, and continued as the chief surgeon until his death in 1915. Dr. Olof I. Sohlberg had come as an immigrant from Sweden at the age of 20, and soon enrolled at Gustavus Adolphus College. He continued his education at Minnesota College Hospital, which later became the University of Minnesota Medical School. Sohlberg was the first foreign-born student to obtain a medical diploma from that institution. He became a member of the staff of Bethesda Hospital from the beginning and until his death in 1918. Both Dr. Lundholm and Dr. Sohlberg had sons who continue to serve as doctors on the staff of Bethesda.[12]

The oldest institution of charity in the Conference, Vasa Children's Home, was begun in 1865, under the leadership of Dr. Eric Norelius. In 1876 he gave it to the Conference, and the responsibility for supervision was given into the hands of a newly created board called the Board of the Society of Mercy. The Home had been enlarged from time to time, and in the early years of the 20th century it was caring for 60 to 70 children.

To serve the northern part of the Conference as the Vasa Home was serving the southern part, the Bethany Children's Home was established in Duluth in 1916. Dr. A. Theo. Ekblad, pastor of Pilgrim Lutheran Church, Superior, Wis., and Rev. Carl O. Swan, pastor of Gloria Dei Church in Duluth, were the leaders in the movement for the establishment of Bethany. Ekblad served as chairman, and Swan as treasurer of Bethany Home Board. In a short time the Home was overcrowded, caring for 50 children, in a 16-room house built as the home of a mining magnate. In 1920 the building was destroyed by fire. No lives were lost, and the children were housed in temporary quarters until a new three-story brick building was completed in 1923.[13]

The policy of keeping orphans in an institution for many years had begun to change as early as 1890, and efforts were made to have children adopted. At first the Executive Committee of the Conference had charge of this work, but in 1909 a committee on children's care recommended to the Conference that it establish a "Receiving Home" to provide temporary care for young children until adoptive homes could be found. No such home was built, but after studies by various committees the Conference in 1914 directed the Executive Committee to call a pastor for full time service as Receiving Home superintendent. Rev. J. E. Hedberg was called, and served from 1915 to 1924. His duties were to find children in need of care and find good homes for them in the congregations of the Conference, and to interest the public in this work and secure donations for it.[14]

The first home for the aged in the Conference was established in 1904 at Chisago City. It was named Bethesda Old People's Home, and was supervised by the Tabitha Board. A committee elected by the Conference in 1902 had recommended that the original hospital property at Lake Como be used for a home for the aged. But the Chisago District, under the leadership of F. M. Eckman of Center City and others, began to raise money and secured a 23-acre tract of land on Green Lake. The site was purchased for $2,500.00. The Board reported that one person had paid $1,500.00 for a lifetime contract, and another $1,000.00. The Home was dedicated on November 10, 1904, the first guests being received on the 21st.

The original building had room for 24 guests and it was soon crowded. A new home was built in 1917, providing facilities for about 80 persons. For a score of years the life contract plan was in effect, but the changing value of the dollar and the longevity of most patients made it necessary to adopt a monthly payment plan.

During the first 50 years of its history the Bethesda Home had only two matrons: Martha Mattson, 1904-1932; Eleonora Slattengren, 1932-1954.[15]

Hultkrans had seen the need of an institution to care for invalids and the chronically ill, many of whom were penniless and living in poorhouses. An opportunity to begin such an institution was presented in 1913 when a summer resort hotel on Lake Gervais, in northeast St. Paul, was for sale at $5,000. The property was purchased, the building was remodeled, and patients began to arrive in July, 1914. The home had a capacity of 30 beds. The property included 60 acres of land, which was cultivated to help provide for the needs of the institution.[16]

Thus, at the time of World War I, the Minnesota Conference had an extensive social mission program, including a hospital, a deaconess home, a nurses' training school, a home for the aged, a home for invalids, two homes for children, and a "receiving home" agency for placing of children in adoptive homes. It was probably one of the most ambitious social mission programs of any church group in America of similar size.

After World War I America was in a new era. The automobile had come to stay, radio had made its amazing beginning, the telephone was taken for granted. There were new horizons, new ideas, new ways of thinking.

In the Minnesota Conference the pioneers were gone. Norelius had died in 1916, the last one of the founders of the Conference. A new generation was doing the work and making the decisions.

Four separate boards were supervising the social mission work of the Conference: The Tabitha Board had charge of the Hospital, the Old People's Home, and the Invalid Home; the Society of Mercy operated the Vasa Children's Home; the Bethany Home Board had charge of the Home in Duluth; the Executive Committee governed the child adoption agency. It seemed to be time for a re-thinking of the program. A committee was elected in 1921, consisting of Rev. G. K. Stark, Rev. C. W. Samuelson, Rev. Swan Johnson, Attorney Erland Lind, and Miss Florence Johnson, "to inspect the charitable institutions of the Conference and report to the Conference at its next convention."[17]

The committee's report, submitted in 1922, said:

"Conditions were in some places far from ideal, but in other cases better than we expected. . . . Some of the Boards seemingly do not function as thoroughly as they should. Timidity and lack of understanding the problems in question seem to be the main cause at least in some cases. The Conference has perhaps not always exercised proper deliberation and judgment in the selection and election of its board members and servants. . . . We believe that the whole question of housing the orphans should be passed on by a competent Board of Charities . . . a board not so much interested in localities as in the welfare of the children and a right solution of this perplexing problem. . . .

"As to the Receiving Home, we are of the conviction that the Conference was rather hasty in creating the office of Superintendency before it actually had a temporary home for the dependent children, until they could be placed in private homes. . . . Your committee is convinced that in order to come properly before the Juvenile Courts and other public authorities, in our work of finding and obtaining custody of dependent children, the Lutheran Church must come before the courts and public authorities united in this work and not as individual synods. . . .

"We shall not elaborate on our recommendations as to Bethesda Hospital nor on the Invalid Home, which in reality is a duplication of the Old People's Home in Chisago City.

"In submitting this report with recommendations we realize that we will receive criticism; both of constructive nature and otherwise. . ."

The committee recommended:

1. That the office of Superintendent at Bethesda Hospital be abolished and that a General Manager be elected whose sole duty shall be to attend to the business of said institution, and that the present superintendent (J. A. Krantz) be elected chaplain.
2. That the new site for Bethesda Hospital be retained for the erection of hospital buildings as soon as circumstances will permit.
3. That the "so-called" Invalid Home and adjoining land at Lake Gervais be sold.
4. That a Board of Charities be organized and incorporated, to have charge of all institutions except Bethesda Hospital and the Deaconess Home.
5. That Vasa Home and Bethany Home be built on the cottage plan.
6. That the office of Superintendency of the Receiving Home be discontinued until the Conference can make satisfactory arrangements for the housing and care of the children obtained for placing in private homes, and that the Executive Committee be directed to provide other work for the present Superintendent (Rev. J. E. Hedberg).

One is led to suspect that there were personalities involved in the investigation and the recommendations made by the committee. It seems that J. A. Krantz and J. E. Hedberg were to be gently eased out of their positions. The reference to interest in localities probably applied both to Duluth and to the Vasa Home.

The Conference voted to separate the Hospital from the other institutions, and that the Hospital Board elect the superintendent. The other institutions were to be put under a new board, with a superintendent in charge. A committee of seven (Rev. A. T. Ekblad, Rev. E. J. Nystrom, Rev. Swan Johnson, and Messrs. C. J. Swendsen, Henry N. Benson, Byron A. Lindgren, and C. O. Hertzman, M.D.) was elected to present recommendations for further action at the next Conference convention.[18]

This committee recommended that all the charitable institutions of the Conference be supervised by one board consisting of 21 members, to be known as the Board of Christian Service. A constitution for this Board was submitted and was approved by the Conference. The Board was granted the right to engage and to dismiss the superintendents, the matrons, and other employees at the institutions. The committee recommended that the members be elected so as to give representation to the areas where institutions were located, with three members at large. But in the constitution there was no provision made for election in this manner.

The Conference elected the following as the first Board of Christian Service: Rev. Oscar Sandahl, Center City; Rev. O. A. Nelson, Minneapolis; Rev. T. A. Conrad, St. James; Rev. C. O. Swan, Duluth; Mr. J. A. Jackson, St. Paul; Mr. Byron A. Lindgren, Minneapolis; Mr. E. W. Olson, Gibbon; Mr. F. A. Thorwall, Duluth; Mr. John Nyquist, Mankato; Mr. Erland Lind, Minneapolis; Rev. Albert Loreen, St. Paul; Rev. L. B. Benson, Red Wing; Mr. C. H. Hammarberg, Milaca; Mr. Hugo Linner, Litchfield; Dr. O. W. Holcomb, St. Paul; Dr. J. T. Ahlstrom, Cokato; Dr. A. Theo. Ekblad, Superior, Wis.; Mr. L. E. Hedstrom, Valley City, N. D.; Rev. A. E. Bomgren, Rice Lake, Wis.; Rev. Aug. P. Lawrence, Braham. Sandahl was designated as the convener of the first meeting. The boards of the various institutions were directed to transfer their property to the new Board, so that it would be ready to function by the time of the next Conference convention.[19]

It was not without some dissatisfaction and bitterness that these decisions were put into effect. This was true both at Duluth and at

Vasa. A group of pastors and church members in and around Duluth started a movement for secession from the Minnesota Conference, but it came to nought. At Vasa the question was one of ownership of ten acres of land on which the Home stood. Professor A. P. Anderson, inventor of puffed wheat, donated a 400-acre farm and some money to the Conference for a children's home. The farm was eight miles from Vasa, near Red Wing. When the Conference, in 1926, built a new Vasa Home on this property, the Vasa congregation did not want to give the old Vasa Home property to the Conference. The case was settled only after long litigation.[20]

The Board of Christian Service held its organization meeting on April 30, 1923 at Bethesda Hospital. L. B. Benson was elected President, Oscar Sandahl vice president, Albert Loreen secretary, and J. A. Jackson treasurer.

The constitution did not specify whether each institution should have a superintendent or if one general superintendent should supervise all. The Board adopted the latter plan, and drew up by-laws governing the general superintendent and the respective institutions. An executive committee, consisting of three to five members of the Board, should have direct charge of the management of each institution.[21]

L. B. Benson was elected to the position of General Superintendent, and assumed his duties on October 1, 1924. Dr. E. E. Ryden, St. Paul, was then elected president of the Board. The total assets of the Board of Christian Service in 1924 were about $615,000.00. Under Benson's leadership the Board of Christian Service and the Conference took up the task of raising $600,000 for completion of the new Vasa Home, erection of a new hospital on Capitol Boulevard, a new home for the aged in Duluth, one in Mankato, and improvements to the other institutions. The appeal was made in 1928, and brought cash and pledges totalling $556,339. When the depression began in the fall of 1929 and became more serious for several years, payment on pledges became a mere trickle. Benson himself was often literally in the field, out in the rural areas of the Conference, talking to members of the Church and trying to collect on the pledges. At times he even accepted farm produce in lieu of cash, hauling home eggs in the back of his car to replenish the low supplies at the institutions.

The new Bethesda was built in 1931 on the spot selected by Krantz in 1917, one of the highest elevations in St. Paul. The old Hospital became the Invalid Home. The former Invalid Home at Lake Gervais was closed. The Deaconess institution was consolidated with Immanuel Deaconess Institute in Omaha.

In spite of the persistent efforts of L. B. Benson and others to collect on the pledges and to manage as economically as possible, Bethesda Hospital stood on the brink of financial disaster in 1933 and 1934. Not until the late thirties could Benson begin to feel that the hospital had weathered the storm.

Lakeshore Lutheran Home for the Aged, Duluth, and Mankato Lutheran Home for the Aged were built in the thirties. The need of an adequate nurses' home had been felt since the new hospital was built. It became a reality in 1954.

The Ashland General Hospital, Ashland, Wisconsin, was acquired by the Conference as a gift in 1946.

Benson continued as general superintendent, in charge of all the institutions, until 1951, when the new position of Superintendent of Services to Children and Aged was created, and Mr. Morton Bjorkquist was called to take charge of the institutions for the aged and the children. Benson served as superintendent of the two hospitals and the Invalid Home until 1955. He was succeeded by Mr. Kenneth Holmquist, who was serving as the superintendent of Minneapolis General Hospital.

The Vasa Children's Home, after 90 years of service as a haven for the orphan or the homeless child, became a home for care of mentally retarded children in 1955, after careful study of this matter by the Board of Christian Service and approval of the Board's recommendation by the Conference. Bethany Home, Duluth, became an institution for emotionally disturbed boys and girls. Because of changing social conditions and new policies relative to the care of dependent children, the original program at the homes had become obsolete and the facilities were not being used to the best advantage.

Construction of a new Invalid Home, to be known as Bethesda Lutheran Infirmary, located next to the Hospital, is in the planning stage as the centennial year of the Conference, 1958, begins. An addition to the Mankato Lutheran Home is being built. An addition is also being planned at the Chisago Lutheran Home. The Social Service department has been expanded to cover family counselling service, care of un-wed mothers, and an increasing number of child adoptions.

Through its Christian Service agencies and institutions the Minnesota Conference now serves approximately 16,000 persons annually.

NOTES

[1] Jonas Auslund to E. Norelius, Nov. 15, 1871 MS.
[2] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Dec. 6-9, 1871.
[3] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Feb. 14-20, 1882.
[4] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, May 18-22, 1887.
[5] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, May 22-25, 1889.
[6] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Feb. 9-14, 1892; Nov. 16-20, 1892.
[7] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Nov. 16-20, 1892.
[8] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, Feb. 12-18, 1895.
[9] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1900, 1909, 1915.
[10] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1918, 1922, 1931.
[11] *The Beginnings and Progress of the Minn. Conf.*, 52ff.
[12] *The Beginnings and Progress of the Minn. Conf.*, 50; *Korsbaneret*, 1919, 250ff.; *The Advance*, XV, 3, March-April, 1957, 15.
[13] Lund, Emil, *Minn.-Konf. och Dess Förs. Hist.*, I, 194ff.
[14] Lund, *op. cit.*, I, 196f.
[15] Lund, Emil, *op. cit.*, I, 171ff; *The Beginnings and Progress of Minn. Conf.*, 55f.
[16] *The Beginnings*, 58f.
[17] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1921, 108.
[18] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1922, 113ff.
[19] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1923, 116ff.
[20] See elsewhere in this volume.
[21] *Minn. Conf. Minutes*, 1924, 109ff.

Chapter XVII

Christian Higher Education

Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, is one of the oldest educational institutions in Minnesota. It has been at is present location since 1876, but its origin—under a different name—was in Red Wing, in the dark and discouraging days of the Civil War, in October, 1862. Its founder was the young pioneer pastor, Eric Norelius. Others in the Conference, laymen as well as pastors, had urged him to begin such a school, and the Conference authorized this action by resolution at its convention held at East Union, Carver County, October 10, 1862.

The Minnesota Conference was originally a part of the Synod of Northern Illinois, from the time of its founding in 1858 until June 5, 1860 when the Augustana Synod was organized. The Synod of Northern Illinois had a school at Springfield, Illinois, and Rev. L. P. Esbjörn, Swedish pioneer pastor at Andover, Illinois, became the Scandinavian professor at Springfield in 1858. His withdrawal from the school in 1860 was the occasion for the separation of the Scandinavians from the Synod of Northern Illinois, and the subsequent founding of the Augustana Synod.[1]

The men who established the Augustana Synod had already asked Esbjörn to become the teacher in a new school to be located in Chicago. This became Augustana College and Theological Seminary. It remained in Chicago only three years, and was then moved to Paxton, and moved again in 1875 to Rock Island. During the year 1862 the future location of the school was uncertain, as various plans were being considered. It was during this period that the pastors and congregations in Minnesota took steps to establish a school of their own in their state. Such a project was not a new thought among them. Norelius and others had been thinking about it for several years. Norelius had parochial school in his Vasa-Red Wing parish as early as 1856. In May, 1862 the congregation in Red Wing appropriated $20.00 for their school "and in order that older persons from other places might attend, receive instruction and prepare themselves for higher studies elsewhere."[2]

Håkan L. Swedberg was a pioneer farmer at Center City, and represented his congregation as lay delegate at the organization of the Minnesota Conference. He had a stepson by the name of Jonas Magnuson, a young man who was devoutly interested in the Church and desired to obtain an education in order to be more adequately prepared to serve the Church. Swedberg had met Norelius in Chicago in 1853 where Norelius, then a 20-year-old college student from Capitol University was temporarily conducting a school for newly arrived immigrants. Swedberg was one of his pupils. Now when his stepson wanted to secure an education, and when Illinois and Augustana College were far away and that institution's future location still up in the air, Swedberg wrote a long letter to Norelius, discussing the proposition of a school in Minnesota. In a postscript he wrote: "If this general school cannot come into being this winter, would you not be willing to take upon yourself to teach two youths about 20 years old in your own home this winter? And if so, on what conditions and at what price? It will cost them $80.00 to travel to Chicago and home again, and then what shall they live on down there?"[3]

Swedberg's pastor, C. A. Hedengran, had also written to Norelius in the summer of 1862, urging him to start a school. On August 15 Norelius wrote to Swedberg, stating his opinions. He said: "I have tried to do what I could to get the common institution [Augustana] in a centrally located place; but now that the board is to determine the location, and we [in Minnesota] do not have **one member** on the board, and we know what the brethren down there [in Illinois] want: Then I have begun to give more attention to the question of a school in Minnesota, especially now that I see a general interest for it among our people. The hard times and the war may for a time silence the question, but if peace and progress come again the question about our school will be actively discussed again. I hope the matter will come up at our next Conference meeting and it would be well if the people in our congregations would consider the matter. . . .

"As to the suggestion that I be the teacher I can say that as far as the desire is concerned, I might have nothing against it. But it may not be enough to have the desire. It would take something more. Nevertheless, I am willing to do what little I can to get the school under way, and then whoever would and could do better may do so. But to get free from here [the Vasa-Red Wing parish] would be no easy matter. It is no use to mention Boren to them, because the congregations have definitely set themselves against him.

"Now I have thought that in order to make a beginning towards a school in Minnesota, it could be announced in "Hemlandet" that I would conduct a private school next winter if I could get ten students. I would then rent a house where they could live and study, buy their own food, and either prepare it themselves or hire a cook. I think a house could be rented at $4.00 per month, food could be prepared at $2.00 per week, and say that tuition would be $1.00 per month for each student, the total cost would be $2.00 per month per person. Then there would be something for wood, light, and stove; but perhaps those things could be obtained without much cash. So if one would say that the expenses would total $2.50 per month, it would be $12.50 for five months. Thus it seems to me that it could go, and though I know it would be much work and little if any salary, I would nevertheless be willing to do it just to see what can be done in regard to a school up here. I am thinking of trying this plan. If it succeeds, well and good; if it fails, nothing is lost.

"Let us bring this matter before our Lord in faithful prayers. He will help us, if the cause is His, and if that is not the case, then may it fail."

Discussion went on personally and by mail until October, when the Conference adopted a resolution asking Norelius "to assume the duty of teaching those young men whom our congregations might send to him, that they may be trained and prepared to teach school both in Swedish and English." Norelius accepted the duty thus assigned to him, and the school opened some time before the end of October. The exact date is not known.[4]

Jonas Magnuson (who later changed his name to Magny) was the first student to enroll, and the only one on the first day of school. By the end of November Norelius had eleven students in his school, including some from Carver County and at least one from the Scandian Grove congregation in Nicollet County. No complete list of the students enrolled seems to be extant.[5]

The church in Red Wing—nicknamed the Swedish barn—was the school building. Instruction was given in Swedish and English grammar and spelling, arithmetic, geography, penmanship, vocal music, and Christianity. The year ended with a public examination. Five were declared ready to fill positions as teachers. Three later became ministers: Jonas Magny, J. G. Lagerstrom, and John S. Nilson.[6]

Among those present at the public examination in Red Wing on April 30, 1863 was Rev. Andrew Jackson, destined to become the future president of the school. Jackson had been a schoolmaster in Sweden. Coming to America in 1852 he worked at various jobs, living at Waupaca, Wisconsin for a time. A group of settlers at Waupaca moved to the western frontier in Minnesota and in 1859 he came to be their school teacher and lay preacher. After ordination in 1861 he returned to these parts as pastor of the Lake Prairie-Wilson Prairie-Norway Lake-Eagle Lake parish in Northern Kandiyohi County. When the Sioux Indians went on the warpath against the whites in western Minnesota in August, 1862, these settlements were dispersed. After 13 of Jackson's parishioners had been massacred, the surviving ones fled to safer regions.[7]

Jackson, suddenly left without a parish to serve, was called as travelling missionary in the Conference, and solicitor for the Conference school. When he found that Norelius wanted to be relieved of the responsibility to teach, and that he (Jackson) was being suggested for the position, he yielded to the plea. He wrote to Norelius that he would need a salary of $400.00 per year, and that if the Conference would pay half of that he would try to earn the rest by preaching in vacant congregations, at Watertown, Waconia, and perhaps other places. He also suggested that the students be required to pay a small tuition fee.[8]

During the first year of school Norelius was the president, professor, and one-man board. The Conference had made no stipulations as to how the school should be governed in the future. When it was learned that Norelius did not want to continue as head of the school, the matter of location was a wide open question. Vasa, St. Paul, and East Union were interested in getting it. By referendum in all the congregations of the Conference the issue was settled in favor of East Union. This was a strictly rural congregation in Carver County, one of the largest congregations in the Conference at the time. Peter Carlson was the pastor.

At the Conference meeting in June, 1863 a committee was elected to call a teacher, with the instruction that Jackson should be considered first. The school term had been set at six months, for which Jackson should receive $200.00.

The question of the relationship between the new school and the Synod and its school was a somewhat delicate one. The Minnesota men had not asked permission to establish a school. They knew that the president of the Synod, T. N. Hasselquist, and others of the pastors in Illinois were cool to the proposition, since they were concerned about getting the fullest possible co-operation in support of Augustana. But now the school in Minnesota was an accomplished fact, and when the Conference requested the Synod to recognize and recommend the new institution, the Synod agreed to welcome the addition to the family. A constitution was adopted giving the school the name "Minnesota Elementary School." The Board of Trustees was to be nominated by the Conference and elected by Synod. The first board members, elected in 1863, were: Pastors Eric Norelius, Vasa; C. A. Hedengran, Center City; Peter Carlson, East Union; and Nils Olsen, Christiania congregation near Northfield; Laymen: Håkan Olson, Red Wing; Håkan Swedberg, Center City; Olof Anderson, Watertown; and Johan Johanson, St. Paul. Norelius became the first chairman of the board. He served on the board until 1871.[9]

Jackson had favored St. Paul as the location for the school, and others besides him believed it should be there. But the rural parishes were dominant and East Union got 409 votes, St. Paul 278, and Vasa 242. Norelius seems to have favored the parochial school plan rather than an academy, but worked for the success of the school as it was carried on at East Union and later at St. Peter.

The East Union people had built a church of aspen logs in 1855, three years before the congregation was organized. This building became the home of the Conference educational institution from 1863 to 1876. The Conference bought it from the congregation in 1864. After the school had been moved to St. Peter the old log building was re-purchased by the congregation and has been used for more than eighty years as a parish hall. Improvements and renovations have been made several times, the most recent being made in 1957. During the first year the building was cold and the teacher and students suffered much from illness. One student died. After the Conference had bought the building, it was moved to a new location, a short distance from its original site. The new campus consisted of a five-acre tract purchased with money contributed by a group of Scandinavian soldiers serving with Company H of the Ninth Minnesota Regiment. (A private's pay at the time was $11.00 per month, and the Army was sometimes many months late in paying the men.)

The building was divided into two stories, and on the main floor three rooms were partitioned off. One room was occupied by the lady students, and another served as a library. In the main room the students sat on benches around three long tables when studying. Near the pulpit was a bench on which the classes took turns sitting while reciting, thirty minutes to an hour each recitation period.

Other necessary improvements were made to the building and its equipment. The building itself was enlarged, the inside was plastered, the outside covered with boards. Students had difficulty at first to find board and lodgings, until in 1869 when a boarding department was established in the school building. One room served as kitchen and dining room for two years, but was rather crowded with a score of students eating there. A kitchen extension was added. Some students boarded at home. Some did their own cooking. Some had free board. The average expense of the students was probably less than $100.00 per year.

To provide some regular and dependable income for the school was a problem that faced the Conference. Peter Carlson, one of the most earnest friends of the school, suggested that a flour mill could be built on the bank of nearby Bevens Creek, the profits of the mill to belong to the school. The mill was built, but the water power was too unreliable. At times the creek went dry, at times floods carried away the dam. Small indeed were the profits that went to the school. The mill served for a time as security for a loan to the school.

Minnesota Elementary School was a name that did not "catch on." In 1865 Sweden and the Swedish immigrants remembered with gratitude the first Christian missionary to Sweden, St. Ansgar, whose death occurred in 865. The name of the school at East Union was changed to St. Ansgar's Academy. Many still continued to speak of it as "the school at Carver" or "Jackson's school."

The people of the Conference in general were not generous in supporting the school. The East Union and West Union congregations probably did as much as all the rest of the Conference. They were particularly generous in providing board, room, and other aid to the students.

Enrollment at the school in 1863-64 and again in 1864-65 reached 68, which seemed very encouraging. But gradually the figures went down instead of up. In 1870 only 31 students were enrolled. Jackson had resigned in 1869 to become pastor of the West Union congregation. He continued to teach part time. J. J. Frodeen became teacher, but spent a year on leave of absence at Augustana to prepare himself better for the position. During one year, 1873-74, Jackson was entirely free from teaching duties. Frodeen was in charge, but he resigned in 1874 to become pastor of the Chisago Lake congregation at Center City.

It was becoming evident to some of the Conference members that the school was not in the right location. Norelius, among others, was convinced that it ought to be in Minneapolis. Under his leadership efforts were made in 1873 to find a suitable site, and to secure promises of financial support. At first it seemed that the efforts would be crowned with success. The hope was that a school could be built near the University to enable students to study at both institutions. The University was then only four years old. Business men in Minneapolis, including Governor John S. Pillsbury, showed some interest in the plan and made offers of support. In May, 1873 the Conference voted to accept the offers and to establish "Gustavus Adolphus Literary and Theological Institute" in Minneapolis. A new board of directors was elected: Norelius and J. W. Anderson for three years; Jonas Auslund and Johan Johanson of St. Paul for two years; C. A. Evald, Minneapolis, and Håkan Olson, Red Wing, for one year.

Warnings against the new school project came from Illinois. A. R. Cervin at Paxton told Norelius to count the cost. H. Reck, also a professor at Paxton, urged continuation of St. Ansgar's as an academy with a three-year course. He also warned against any sort of connection with a state school. Hasselquist recognized the sincerity of Norelius, but opposed the school.

The depression of 1873 soon put an end to the hopes for support from business men in Minneapolis. At the Conference meeting in October, Norelius was forced to report that the financial situation and other circumstances had put a stop to the project.

The Conference had contributed approximately $5,850.00 for buildings, teachers' salaries, and other purposes up to the end of 1873, a ten-year period. Among students who had received a part of their education at St. Ansgar's were about a score of ministers, and such future leaders as Dr. M. Wahlstrom, president of Gustavus from 1881 to 1904; John Lind, Congressman from 1886 to 1892 and governor from 1898 to 1900; John Udden, an eminent geologist; John Lundeen, colonel in the U. S. Army; and Andrew Holt, justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court.

When the Conference began to consider the question of moving the school, Andrew Thorson went to work to bring it to St. Peter. Thorson was a pioneer farmer at Scandian Grove, and one of the leaders in the establishment of the congregation. He was a man with more education than most of the early settlers, and had had some experience in bookkeeping. In 1872 he was elected register of deeds of Nicollet County. On February 18, 1873 he wrote a letter to Norelius, setting forth the disadvantages of Minneapolis as a location for the school, and urging that St. Peter be considered. "We could no doubt get a few thousand dollars and a five acre tract. St. Peter is a beautiful place, clean and healthful." [10]

Norelius did not seem to favor the idea. But when the Conference met in St. Peter in October, 1873, and it then had become evident that the Minneapolis project would not succeed, Andrew Thorson and a few other men from St. Peter presented their offer. The Conference elected a new committee to study the moving of the school, and stipulated that it wanted a building site plus $10,000.00. When the Conference met in Minneapolis in February, 1874 St. Peter was ready to fulfill these conditions, and the offer was accepted.

Andrew Thorson, Peter Benson, and Andrew Nelson of the Scandian Grove congregation took the lead in raising about half of the required sum in their own community and in St. Peter. Rev. L. A. Hocanzon and architect Bassford drew the plans for the building. O. N. Ostrom of St. Peter was awarded the main contract, and before winter the building was enclosed. The completion of the work took a year longer than expected, mostly due to financial difficulties. The building was built of Kasota stone, and was a large and substantial structure, three stories and basement. Since 1905 it has been known familiarly as "Old Main," and has served for many years as the college science building.

As the time drew near for the opening of the school at St. Peter the Conference had the problem of finding a man to take charge of it. Jackson declined. Frodeen had just moved to Center City in 1875. Many urged Norelius to be head of the school, but he declined. Rev. J. G. Lagerstrom, pastor of First Lutheran Church, St. Peter, and a hard-working member of the Board, suggested Rev. J. P. Nyquist of Chicago. He was a man of 42 who had received his education in Sweden and had come to America at the age of 34. He accepted the call and arrived in St. Peter in October. School opened on the 16th, with 18 students. Mr. Charles Holmberg was the English teacher, the only teacher besides Nyquist.

Furniture and equipment were at the very minimum necessary for a school. The kitchen range was borrowed. The students and teachers lived, ate, slept, studied, and worshipped in the same building.

Dedication day, October 31, was a great and festive day in St. Peter and in the Conference. Norelius gave the dedicatory address, first in Swedish, then in English. Norelius spoke of the reasons for naming the school in honor of King Gustavus Adolphus. He told his audience "what we expect to accomplish, and how we mean to accomplish it." He closed with this affirmation: "Now we do not hesitate to profess that we are Christians, Protestants, and evangelical Lutherans and that we will carry on the work of education in consonance with the principles that are implied in this profession." [11]

In 1877, as Christmas vacation was drawing near, someone thought it would be a wonderful idea to have a festive service at the school before the students left for home. Here is an account of that celebration, as reported by the President a couple of weeks later:

"The outward arrangements were very plain: A platform at the front end of the front room, covered with rag rugs. (Don't laugh! We had nothing better.) And on the rug stood the lectern and a borrowed melodeon. Above that were two Swedish flags draping the two front windows. (We have no American flag. So far we have had to borrow. If someone wants to give us one, we shall be thankful.) A decorated Christmas tree in one corner, and a transparency in the front corner—that was all! No, something more. A chandelier in each room; they also were borrowed. It does not do to be poor and helpless at the same time. What we do not have we can borrow until generous people give us what we need. Thus it has to be in many places.

"As simple as the arrangements were, they were rather neat and pleasant. Of course, everything was scrubbed clean.

"Although the weather was bad, or rather the road conditions, so many people came at 7:00 o'clock, the time set for the program, that both rooms were almost filled, and if the roads had been good the visitors would not have found room.

"The festival began with Swedish hymn No. 204, sung in four parts, and then Pastor Lagerstrom read a Psalm and led in prayer. Then there was a song by the choir. Then Pastor Jackson gave a very instructive address on the text, 'Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?' The address was powerful and edifying. After a song by the choir, Professor Williamson gave an address in English. Then the choir sang 'Hosanna,' after which Pastor Ryden gave an instructive address, which dwelt particularly on the practical application of Christianity in life, with specific admonitions to the students. After a song by the choir, the undersigned [President J. P. Nyquist] presented a written treatise on the significance of Christian education for church and state. After still another song by the choir one of the students gave a farewell address and read a poem which he had composed for the occasion. Then the undersigned sang the 23rd Psalm, with melodeon accompaniment. Then the choir sang Swedish Hymn No. 55 in parts, after which an offering was received to cover the cost of the festival. This went very well. The expenses were about 70 cents. The offering amounted to $7.00. The undersigned closed with a few general comments, and prayer. Hymn 3 and a duet formed the conclusion to the entire program. It was a pleasant evening and made a good impression on the visitors as well as the school family.

"In connection with this account we may mention that school is now in session again, with 61 students, 52 men and nine women. Thirty live at the school and eat at the common table. Four girls live in a couple of basement rooms and do their own cooking. All the rest live downtown. Nine of the students receive free board, room, and wood, and pay only for tuition. Six of these had the same privileges during the fall term." [12]

Such was the Gustavus spirit eighty years ago. There was a deep love for the school in many hearts, and there were men who made great sacrifices to keep it going, and to enlarge its program and its influence.

Enrollment of students at the new institution gradually increased, reaching an even 100 in 1879-80. The school had been co-educational from its very beginning in Red Wing, and continued to be so at East Union and now in St. Peter. But Nyquist was never convinced that this was a good policy. He did his best to keep the two sexes as far apart as possible. They must not belong to the same college society. It was not proper for a young man and a young woman to be seen walking together unless they were engaged. Nyquist resigned in 1881 with the object in mind of starting a separate school for girls, to keep them away from Gustavus. He failed to find support for his plan.

In spite of his strong opposition to co-education, and his strong emphasis on things Swedish, Nyquist had served the institution capably and faithfully during its first years at the new location. The building which at first seemed huge and which was expected to be adequate for years to come, was already crowded when Nyquist resigned.

Matthes Wahlstrom, a young man from the West Union congregation, had been a student at St. Ansgar's Academy, had gone to Paxton for further studies, and had been ordained in 1879, had become a member of the Gustavus faculty in 1880. When Nyquist resigned, the following year, Wahlstrom was elected president, a position he held for 23 years.

He immediately set to work to make the institution a college in fact as well as in name. A freshman college class was begun in 1881, but a sophomore class could not be started until 1885. A junior class was added in 1888. Members of this class remained to become seniors in the fall of 1889, and the first graduating class in 1890. There were eight young men in the class. One of them, J. A. Youngquist, became a member of the faculty in 1895 and served until 1935 as professor of Latin and Greek.

In order to provide more room at the college, particularly dormitory space for the lady students, two brick-veneered buildings were built in 1884, one on each side of the main building, and they were named North Hall and South Hall. With a professor and his family living in each building, supervision was provided for some twenty girls in each of the two halls.

A very modest wooden building was built in 1886 for use as a gymnasium. Money for it had been raised by the students. It served its purpose until 1922. Regular classes in gymnastics for both sexes were introduced. But as the college became crowded and more space was needed, the gym came to have various uses, even as the place for chapel exercises and general programs.

The School of Commerce and the School of Music were added in 1887, to be housed in a new building erected that year. It is the building now known as the business administration building—BU, for short. The first floor was the dining hall, planned to take care of 200 students.

Professor R. Lagerstrom became head of the Music department in 1888 and remained in this position for 19 years. Reed organs in the early eighties were used for giving music lessons. The first piano was purchased in 1885. The first pipe organ was bought in 1886, with the faculty taking the financial responsibility. The first pipe organ recital was given on January 17, 1887. During the previous Christmas vacation a male chorus, under the direction of Lagerstrom, had gone on a tour. Offerings received helped to pay for the organ.

Several of the early teachers had received their education in Sweden, including K. A. Kilander, Inez Rundstrom, J. S. Carlson, and R. Lagerstrom. Others came from the Lutheran regions in Pennsylvania, including the following, all of whom were ordained pastors: J. A. Bauman, Wm. K. Frick, S. Koiner, John Sander, and J. P. Uhler, who remained on the faculty 55 years, and became well-known as the "grand old man of Gustavus."

Several of the early graduates achieved positions of considerable importance and responsibility. C. E. Seashore of the class of 1891 became an outstanding psychologist who made original contributions to the psychology of music; the class of '92 furnished presidents for the Minnesota, Illinois, and Kansas conferences of the Augustana Church; Henry N. Benson, '93, became a state senator and attorney-general; the class of 1895 included Adolph O. Eberhart, governor of Minnesota, and Thomas H. Johnson, who became prominent in politics in Manitoba, Canada.

There were 159 A.B. degrees granted during the years of Wahlstrom's administration, and 59 of these graduates entered the ministry. Only 15 of the 159 were women.

After 1887 no new buildings appeared on the campus for 18 years. Times were hard in the nineties. The Conference was trying to expand its mission work, and to get a hospital going. Debts were growing larger, and a special appeal in 1900 failed to reach the desired amount. There was also a growing discontent in some quarters with respect to the location of the college. The people interested in the educational work of the Minnesota Conference realized that the college needed more support, new buildings, an endowment fund. As these matters were discussed by alumni, teachers, students, and church members, there were many who expressed the thought that the college should be moved to Minneapolis or St. Paul.

A petition for a special Conference meeting was sent to the president, J. Fremling, in July 1902. It was signed by 12 pastors: C. A. Hultkrans, superintendent of Bethesda Hospital, St. Paul; E. J. Werner, West Union; J. O. Lundberg, Svea; J. Telleen, Minneapolis; L. A. Johnston, St. Paul; Carl O. Olander, Minneapolis; P. A. Mattson, Minneapolis; E. O. Stone, Minneapolis; J. G. Hultkrans, Minneapolis; O. A. Nelson, Minneapolis; A. F. Almer, Forest Lake; and C. J. Carlson, St. Paul.

Three items were listed as requiring action by the Conference. The third one was that the agitation about moving Gustavus Adolphus College to the twin cities made it advisable to decide the question as soon as possible.

The special convention was held in October, 1902 in New London. Gustavus alumni in the twin cities had already subscribed $25,000 and had a promise from James J. Hill that he would give $1.00 for every $3.00 raised by the Conference if the college was moved to the cities. C. A. Smith had promised $50,000 worth of timber. The alumni had voted to get $200,000 in "good subscription" before the next Conference meeting if the school is moved. Among those present to urge this move was John Lind, former Congressman and governor. The Conference voted to move its school to the twin cities if the promises of financial aid were met. A committee consisting of Dr. Gustaf Rast, Dr. J. A. Krantz, and Dr. A. Lind, was elected to find a site of at least 20 acres.[13]

The subscriptions did not come as fast as expected. When the Conference met in Minneapolis in May, 1903, the committee reported that 15 persons had promised a total of $130,000.00, of which $62,500 was to be James J. Hill's donation. The Conference granted the committee another year to secure more money, and another committee was elected to choose a site. The committee consisted of Pastors P. A. Mattson and O. A. Nelson, and Dr. A. Lind, Minneapolis; Pastors C. J. Carlson and C. E. Hultkrans, and Mr. John M. Carlson, St. Paul; Pastor J. Magny, and Mr. A. P. Mellquist, and Mr. A. P. Peterson representing the rural areas. The committee on the fund appeal had no more in 1904 than in 1903. They complained about lack of cooperation in the Conference, and that some had worked against the project by writing articles for the church press and the daily papers. The committee on site recommended a site on Lake Street, two and one-half blocks from the river, if 40 acres could be secured free.

A new vote was taken on the question of whether to move, with the result that 105 were in favor of moving, 141 were against it.

The St. Peter citizens' committee had an offer ready of $15,000 for the school. The leaders of the committee were C. A. Johnson, chairman; J. A. Poetz, secretary; and H. L. Stark, treasurer. The Conference accepted the offer and authorized the College board to raise funds for a new building. (Five members of the Conference delegation—Erland Lind, P. A. Mattson, F. M. Eckman, J. W. Eckman, and J. A. Gustafson—filed a formal protest against acceptance of the St. Peter offer.)

Immediately after voting to keep Gustavus in St. Peter and to erect a new building there, the Conference voted to start a new school in Minneapolis, to be called Minnesota College. To serve as a board for one year the following were elected: Pastors E. O. Stone, C. J. Petri, L. A. Johnston, F. M. Eckman, and A. P. Monten; laymen, Dr. J. S. Carlson, J. M. Carlson, V. E. Lawson, Erland Lind.

The present auditorium at Gustavus, with the chapel on second floor seating about 800, was completed in 1905. Wahlstrom resigned in 1904 and P. A. Mattson was elected president. Other candidates nominated were L. A. Johnston, C. G. Schulz, S. G. Youngert, P. M. Lindberg, V. H. Hegstrom, C. W. Foss, Alfred Bergin, and Frank Nelson. In the election Mattson had a majority of nine votes over all the other candidates.[14]

It was not an easy position to which Dr. Mattson had been elected. The struggle in the Conference about the location of the school had aroused some bitter feelings which did not readily subside.

The congregations in the Red River Valley had established Northwestern College at Fergus Falls, and now that Minnesota College was being built in Minneapolis, the Conference had three schools to support. It had never been able to support one adequately, but the congregations were gaining in numerical and financial strength, and the contributions increased slowly. The regular appropriations for current operation of the schools was on a per communicant basis, a total of 25 cents per member for all the schools to be divided so as to give Gustavus 80 per cent, Minnesota College 12 per cent, Northwestern eight per cent. There was also to be a free will offering for each school.

In 1908, the 50th anniversary year of the Conference, the 25 cent fee should have netted $12,500, but only $9,623 came in. Of the 396 congregations, 191 had failed to send in the full amount requested of them. The offerings for Gustavus amounted to $254.10, for Minnesota College $542.49, for Northwestern College $323.59. About $2,000 had come in on arrears from previous years.

In addition to the auditorium, built at the time Mattson assumed the presidency, one more building was erected during his administration, a dormitory to house about 65 girls. It was completed in 1910 and named Johnson Hall in memory of Governor John A. Johnson, whose sudden death in 1909 saddened the hearts of many. He had been a friend of the college, and had given a great burst of enthusiasm to the Conference delegation at the 50th anniversary in 1908, when he appeared on the platform of the St. Paul auditorium and presented a check from Andrew Carnegie in the amount of $32,500, the largest gift ever received by the College up to that time. This money together with funds contributed by the people of the Conference and other friends of the College, was used to build Johnson Hall.

Mattson had to face another problem. Not only at Gustavus, but at other schools in the Augustana Synod, students wanted intercollegiate football. The Church people in general were against it, and Mattson had the difficult duty of enforcing the church's decisions at Gustavus. Though he was a scholar of high rank and gave conscientious service to the College, he was often criticized, even by members of the Board and other friends of the institution. Ill health made it necessary for him to take a leave of absence in 1909, and he made use of the opportunity to tour Europe and the Holy Land. In 1911 he resigned from his position and became pastor at Cannon Falls. Two years later he was elected Conference president and was re-elected 25 times, until his retirement in 1939 at the age of 74. He left Cannon Falls in 1921, and became "Field Secretary" of the Conference, organizing about 35 or more congregations.

The president's office at Gustavus was vacant from 1911 to 1913, with Dr. J. P. Uhler serving as acting president. O. J. Johnson, president of Luther College, Wahoo, Nebraska, was elected president of Gustavus in 1912, but declined. A renewed call in 1913 was accepted.

During the Mattson regime a beginning was made towards the establishment of an endowment fund. Dr. L. G. Almen was employed to solicit subscriptions towards a building and endowment fund, payable in two annual installments. Progress was slow. While Uhler was acting president he obtained a promise from James J. Hill that Hill would donate $40,000 if the college could secure $160,000 from other sources, including the beginning already made by Almen, or $50,000 if the college raised $200,000. The conditions must be met by May 1, 1914.

Almen died in 1912 without seeing the fulfillment of the project. Dr. Carl Solomonson, pastor of Gloria Dei Church, Duluth, was persuaded to take charge of the fund appeal. When the new president, O. J. Johnson, came in 1913, the work began in earnest. A staff of workers was drafted to carry the appeal into every congregation in the Minnesota Conference. But when the Conference met in February, 1914, the appeal was still $40,000 short of the goal. On Friday evening, February 20, a group met to pray for victory. On the next day they pleaded eloquently for the cause. Most effective was Rev. A. T. Ekblad, Superior, Wisconsin. A unanimous resolution was adopted to raise the remaining amount at once, on the floor of the convention. About forty pastors or laymen pledged to raise $400 each in their churches. Others pledged more, some less. After 80 minutes of pledging, it was announced that the needed amount was more than reached. It was discovered afterwards, however, that someone had made a mistake in adding, and that $10,000 more was still needed. The city of St. Peter raised most of what was lacking.

The money came in a steady stream, and on May 1, 1914 the college bell proclaimed the news that the necessary amount, $200,000, was on hand. There was jubilation on college hill.

Mr. James J. Hill would not recognize about 700 acres of forest land in Douglas County, Oregon, given by C. A. Smith, as the equivalent of cash. His check, therefore, was for only $40,000, not $50,000.

The alumni began in 1916 to raise funds for a new gymnasium. Five years later construction of the gym was begun. It cost $150,000 and when completed was one of the finest in the state. Inter-collegiate football and other sports had come back in 1917.

In 1917 and 1918 students and alumni, to a total of about 400, entered the military service. The oldest of them was Colonel John Lundeen, retired, 69 years of age, who had been a student at St. Ansgar's Academy 1864-65, who again entered active service. Eleven Gustavians died in service during World War I.

The college campus itself became a military training field, with a Student Army Training Corps established there under command of First Lieutenant Soren K. Ostergaard, a native of Denmark. He himself became a graduate of Gustavus in 1919, and commander of a R.O.T.C. which was established after the Armistice and continued until 1920.

Enrollment increased during the "prosperous twenties," reaching the 500 mark for the first time in 1926. This, however, included the academy and certain other special students. The college students numbered 500 for the first time in 1928.

Minnesota College was declining in the meantime. It offered only one year of college work. The academies of the Augustana Church were all having financial difficulties, with decreasing enrollment. The Conference closed Minnesota College in 1930 and discontinued the Gustavus Academy in 1931.

The first dormitory for men at Gustavus was built in 1929, and named Uhler Hall, honoring the beloved "Grand Old Man" who had then been teaching at Gustavus for nearly half a century. During the depression decade no new buildings were built, except the Fieldhouse, financed almost entirely by gifts from boosters of the athletic program directed by Coach George B. Myrum, beginning with a $5,000 gift from Dr. and Mrs. O. W. Holcomb. In the fall of 1938 Myrum was killed in a traffic accident near Belle Plaine as he and the football team were returning home after a game. Two students were victims of the same accident. The building was named the Myrum Memorial Fieldhouse. At first unheated, it was used for skating and hockey games in winter, indoor practice of various sports in fall and spring. After a heating system was installed it has been in use for basketball games, and as an auditorium for all large gatherings at the college.

Dr. O. J. Johnson retired from active service in 1942. By that time a new era had dawned. America was in its first year of World War II. Enrollment at the college, which had been down to 353 in 1935, was up to 635 in 1940. The draft and enlistment for military service reduced attendance at college to a serious degree in the early forties. Such was the situation when Dr. Johnson resigned.

His successor was Dr. Walter A. Lunden, a graduate of Gustavus, a native Minnesotan, who had been ordained in the United Lutheran Church, but who was teaching in the sociology department at the University of Pittsburgh.

He became president of Gustavus on July 1, 1942, but served less than a year and a half. He resigned in the fall of 1943 to enter military service. Dr. O. A. Winfield, vice president, became acting president.

During Lunden's short administration arrangements were made to have the U. S. Navy train men at Gustavus under the so-called "V-12 program." This program began on July 1, 1943, with Lieutenant Jesse H. Smith in command until January 1, 1944, when Lieutenant Charles P. McCurdy became the commander. Approximately 400 men were in training when Lunden resigned, and about 200 civilian students were enrolled.

Dr. Edgar M. Carlson, professor at Augustana Theological Seminary, Rock Island, was elected president of Gustavus at the Conference convention in Holy Trinity Church, Duluth, in April, 1944. He had been a member of the Christianity faculty at Gustavus from 1937 to 1942. He became president in the fall of 1944, and has continued in that position since then.

At the end of the war the Navy V-12 was discontinued. Gustavus, in common with other colleges, faced the difficult problem of unpredictable fluctuations in enrollment. The "GI Bill" giving liberal aid to veterans for their college education, suddenly swelled the enrollment to double the pre-war figures. In 1946-47 the figure was 995, the next year it was up to 1,258, and in 1948-49 it was at the high point of 1,271. From this point it dropped to 826 in the second semester of the 1953-54 school year. Since then there has been a gradual increase to 1,073 in the fall of 1957.

When Carlson came to Gustavus in 1944 the faculty consisted of about 30 members. Now there are approximately 75. Of these, only 13 were at Gustavus prior to 1944. During the first 13 years of the

Carlson administration six new buildings have been added to the campus. Three of these are temporary wooden buildings, the Classroom Annex, the Fine Arts building, and the Ranchereno. The first two were obtained from the government when demobilization after World War II left the army with many surplus buildings. Three of the new buildings are permanent, the Folke Bernadotte Library, Wahlstrom Hall for women students, and the new dormitory for men. In 13 years the assets of the College have increased in value from a million and a half to four million dollars.

The assassination of Count Folke Bernadotte in 1948, while on a peace mission in Israel, dramatized in a tragic way the world's need of better human relations. Edgar Carlson was one who believed that a Christian college could set for itself no higher goal than to train men and women for dedicated service to this cause. To further this aim the Folke Bernadotte Foundation was established in 1949. At Commencement in 1950 Countess Bernadotte and her son, and Count Bernadotte's successor, Dr. Ralph Bunche, were guests of the College and participants in dedication of the Folke Bernadotte Library.

The Bernadotte Foundation seeks to strengthen the financial structure of the College through solicitation of gifts and by means of investments. The Foundation owns Oakridge Cemetery Corporation in Chicago. The Foundation sponsors the annual United Nations Institute in connection with commencement week, bringing to Gustavus prominent leaders in the UN.

The most generous benefactors to Gustavus have been Dr. and Mrs. E. J. Vickner, who have established the Almen-Vickner Foundation. A large library collection, a guest house and cash gifts total in value more than $100,000 to date.

In its earliest years the school had very few students who were not of the Lutheran faith. The number of non-Lutheran students began to increase slowly after Gustavus became a four-year liberal arts college in 1890, but—except for the period of the V-12 program—the Lutherans have always constituted a large majority, in recent years about 75 to 80 per cent of the student body. Chapel services, with compulsory attendance, have always been held at Gustavus. As the Centennial of the Conference draws near plans are under way for a College Church, to cost approximately $600,000, to accommodate 1,500 persons. The money is being contributed mainly by the congregations of the Minnesota Conference.

NOTES

[1] Stephenson, George M., *The Founding of the Augustana Synod;* Olson, Oscar N., *The Augustana Lutheran Church in America,* 264ff.
[2] Peterson, Conrad, *A History of Eighty Years,* 11f.
[3] H. L. Swedberg to Eric Norelius, Aug. 1, 1862. MS. The entire letter is translated in my *Eric Norelius, Pioneer Midwest Pastor and Churchman,* 108-109.
[4] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Oct. 8-10, 1862; Eric Norelius to H. L. Swedberg, Aug. 15, 1862, MS.
[5] Johnson, Emeroy, *Eric Norelius,* 110f.
[6] Peterson, Conrad, *A History of Eighty Years,* 13f.
[7] Johnson, Emeroy, *A Church Is Planted,* 160, 164ff.
[8] Johnson, Emeroy, *Eric Norelius,* 118f.
[9] Johnson, *op. cit.,* 118ff.
[10] Andrew Thorson to Eric Norelius, Feb. 18, 1873 MS.
[11] The address is published in full in my volume, *Eric Norelius,* pages 187-191.
[12] *Luthersk Kyrkotidning, January,* 1878.
[13] *Petition for a special Conference meeting,* July 16, 1902, MS.; *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* Oct. 21-25, 1902.
[14] *Minn. Conf. Minutes,* May 17-23, 1904.

Chapter XVIII

God Gave The Growth

Sam Rönnegård, a pastor in the Church of Sweden, and a writer who has sought to bring his own nation something of the story of the Swedish immigrants in America, has written a book called "I Röda Vingens Spår." (In the Footsteps of Red Wing). It is a fictionalized story of Hans Mattson, the pioneer settler at Vasa, who became a military and political figure in Minnesota, and served for a few years as American consul in India.

In the closing chapter of the book, Rönnegård has an account of a community mass meeting at Vasa, at which Mattson was guest of honor. Norelius is portrayed as master of ceremonies, and himself sharing in the high esteem of his neighbors.

Mattson, in his address to the Vasa people, told of something he had seen in India:

"I sat one day in the open area in front of a hotel in Benares together with some British officers. A low caste Hindu, followed by a boy, came over to us and asked if he might show us the mango tree. When permission was granted the boy scraped together a little pile of earth on the roadway in front of us. The man, who had nothing on except a loose-fitting piece of cotton cloth, and in his hand a white napkin and a small bag, stooped down by the little pile of earth. With his eyes fastened on us he took out of his bag a mango nut, which looked like a large plum pit, which he planted in the pile of earth. After patting and smoothing the earth he said some prayers and incantations, and made some passes over it with his magic wand, striking a pose of serious expectancy. After a lapse of about one minute we saw the pile of earth open at the top and the tender sprout of a plant was slowly coming up through the opening. The Hindu sat with clenched hands, occasionally breathing on the plant, while he sang and seemed to be calling on some unseen being. Meantime the plant was growing taller and stronger, until it took the shape of a little tree, which continued to grow and put forth branches and leaves. At last a ripe mango fruit hung on one of the branches.

"That which I now have related you call a sleight-of-hand performance, or the art of conjuring. Now I shall tell of something else, something that is pure and unadulterated reality, but which may seem to be just as miraculous.

"A few days ago I came riding behind eager horses from Red Wing to Vasa. It was the same road where I, 37 years ago, blazed a trail through the wilderness, with a yoke of oxen and a creaking cart.

"What a transformation in these years! The former wilderness has been changed into smiling fields, which now are in the fair hues of spring. All along the road there are lovely homes, which with very few exceptions are occupied by Swedes who, like myself, have begun their journey as poor immigrants. No, not all, for from some of these homes the first immigrants have been carried to their last resting place and have been succeeded by their children, born on the farm where they now live.

"What a scene is spread before us from this place where I now stand! Below us, to the south, we see the wooded valley, watered by Willard's spring, where my brother-in-law and I nearly died one cold January night in 1854. There, just above that valley, I see the hill where our first log cabin stood. A short distance beyond was my father and mother-in-law's hospitable home. From there I brought my young bride home in a roaring November storm. Here, below the church, is the field which I first plowed. Down there where Pastor Norelius has built the beautiful home for children, there was forest at that time, where we cut timber for our houses. And on the other side of the road I see Pastor Norelius' fine home, where he now resides as a patriarch among the younger generation. For decades he has guided the development here at Vasa. From here his parish has grown until it extends all over Minnesota, and over the thousands of places in this great land where Swedes live.

"Wherever I look I see green fields, grazing flocks, parks, groves, beautiful homesteads, churches, and schoolhouses. Behind the hills in the distance I can see just now the smoke of a railroad engine. What a change in 37 years!

"But Vasa is only a part of a larger community. When I came to the Mississippi River in 1852 this river was the frontier of civilization in the Northwest, if I except Iowa, which then had only a small population. Twelve new states have been settled since then and have been admitted into the Union. Then there was no railroad west of Chicago, now there are four great lines that cross the 2,000-mile stretch between the Mississippi and the Pacific Ocean. More than a hundred smaller lines crisscross the West in all directions, while hundreds of steamboats on rivers and lakes vie with the railroads in carrying the products of the land out to all the world.

"May I return to the story of the Hindu sleight-of-hand performer. To this day I am unable to explain what he did to get a mango seed to sprout and grow into a tree before our eyes. It was astonishing. But what is it I have showed you today? Have I not showed you how a little seed has grown into a great tree, with branches stretching far and wide? And this remarkable change has transpired before our eyes. We, the pioneers, saw the day of small beginnings and we have lived long enough to see the tree with its branches, and the fruit which a younger generation only has to pick. But it behooves you younger ones not to forget what it cost your fathers and mothers to bring these fruits to maturity. And it behooves us all to thank the Lord of heaven and earth, who has given sun and rain, for without His blessing the miracle could not have taken place."

This fictionalized review of the past, as seen from the vantage point of the year 1890, is not far-fetched. The theme can be the same today, and the picture can stand out in even sharper focus. Great indeed are the changes that have come in a century, yes, even in the past decade.

When the first few scattered groups of Lutherans agreed to form the Lutheran Minnesota Conference there were about 900 members in 13 congregations, served by five pastors. From this small beginning the Conference has grown to about 166,000 members in 306 congregations, served by more than 200 pastors. Two other conferences have been established in areas formerly included in the Minnesota Conference. Institutions have been established and are being maintained for educational, missionary, and eleemosynary purposes.

No Hindu magician has brought this to reality. Much human thought and effort have been involved. Many a Paul has planted, many an Apollos has watered and tended the plant. But it was God who gave the growth.

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